

The civic association "Legal Development Network" is a coalition of NGOs that develop and support communities through empowerment of their residents

We change ourselves and we want to make this world a better place!

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEGAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



WE INSPIRE OTHERS

A STEP AHEAD

A STEP AHEAD



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A STEP AHEAD

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE
LEGAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK**

2016

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01

LEGAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The civic association
«Legal Development Network»
is a coalition of NGOs that develop and support communities
through empowerment of their residents.

Background



LEGAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The Association was established in 2009, its first name was the Community Law Centers Network. A total of eight organizations decided to unite their effort as a coalition of NGOs that provide free primary legal aid within the framework of the Legal Empowerment of the Poor Initiative supported by International Renaissance Foundation.

In September 2015, we registered the network as a legal entity «Civic Association «Community Law Centers Network». In 2016, it was renamed as the Legal Development Network. As of September 2016, the Legal Development Network encompasses 25 organizations from 17 regions of Ukraine. 30 offices support ongoing activities in small and medium communities.

Initially, the activities of the CLC were focused on raising awareness of citizens' rights, providing advice and aid on various legal issues. Actually, the Centers are client-oriented structures where people can get leaflets, advice, and assistance with document production. The Centers carry out field visits to remote districts and villages to advise the villagers and to share information. In addition, the Centers use modern technologies such as Skype-consultations for better access to justice. As of 2016, Community Law Centers became LDN offices.

In 2012, Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation established the Information Resource Center "Legal Space". The Legal Space information platform is a tool used by the network to improve awareness of legal challenges and threats to small and medium-sized communities in Ukraine, to disseminate information about their solutions through the collection and publication of success stories. It gives people hope and belief in the possibility to solve problems by legal means, and unites society. Another objective is the development of services providing legal advice available online and through offline forum (legal advice provided in writing within 24 hours).

Since August 2015, the mobile Android application is available to grant a direct online access to a lawyer through a smartphone.

Moreover, the Offices implement network projects focusing on various legal challenges and offering common solutions in the areas such as prevention of domestic violence, protection of the land title, and anti-discrimination. They are increasingly focused on mediation and alternative dispute resolution, mainly in three areas – school mediation for a safer environment, mediation in the courts to reduce the duration and cost of the proceedings, and mediation in communities to ease social tension.

In certain strategic cases, the Centers provide legal representation of their clients in the court or refer them to the legal firms that provide pro bono services, human rights groups or Centers of secondary legal aid.

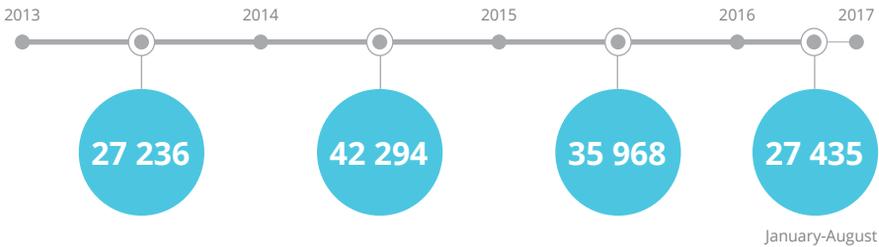
Since the outburst of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the LDN Offices had to learn how to manage new challenges and serve new groups of clients. Local authorities are often too weak, corrupted, or unprepared to quickly and effectively address such challenges. Five Centers in Chernihiv, Bila Tserkva, Kovel, Kherson, and Chuhuiv joined their effort to provide free legal aid to the mobilized soldiers and ATO participants through visits to military bases and positions. Due to Office autonomy, mobility, and ongoing capacity building activities, they were able to adapt to new environment and meet social needs.

Key achievements

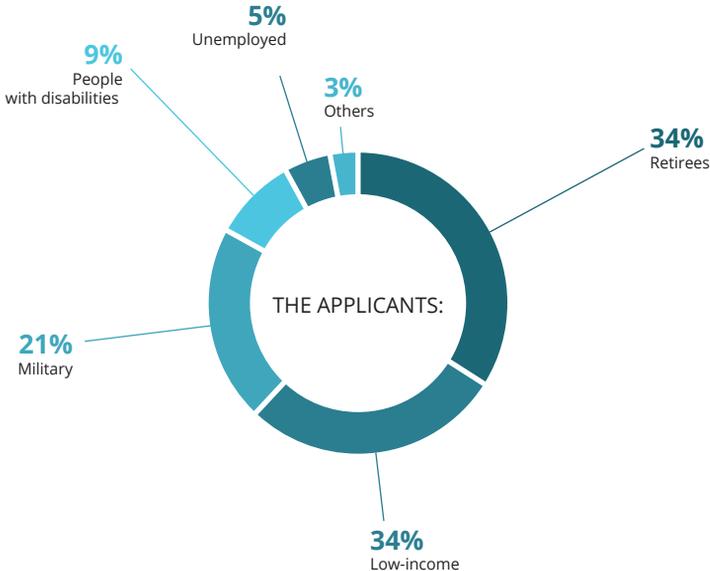
A total of 50 thousand people annually seek legal aid from our Network.

Forms of assistance include personal reception of citizens, phone consultations, and field consultations in regional centers and villages.

STATISTICS OF CITIZENS' REQUESTS TO OUR OFFICES THROUGHOUT 2013-2016:



GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO SEEK LEGAL AID:



The main activities of the Network Offices

- Mediation (school and court);
- Free legal aid to new target audiences: ATO participants, members of their families, and IDPs;
- Aid to victims of domestic violence;
- Empowerment of Roma communities;
- Advocacy (development and adoption of local programs of FPLA (free primary legal aid);
- Integration of primary and secondary free legal aid;
- Community policing;
- Mobilizing activists and training legal advisers in the communities;
- Development of cross-sectoral collaboration.

02

INTRODUCING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Online legal aid is the new service of the Legal Development Network which is developed and implemented by the Information Resource Center «Legal Space» team.

Online legal aid

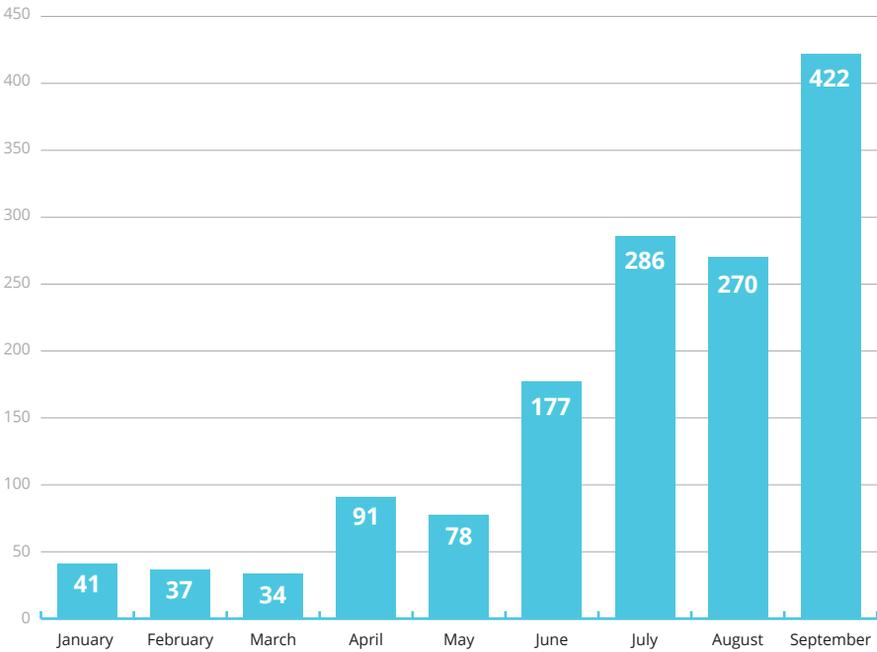
This service enables the website visitors to obtain real-time legal advice in the comfort of their homes. It saves their time and money. The most important thing is that it makes free legal aid accessible to every Internet user.

Since January 2014, experts from five offices have scheduled duty hours: Monday to Friday from 10 am-4 pm. Along with the rapid growth of the demand for this service and the burden on lawyers, respectively, observed from the summer of 2015 (*see table below*), the number of participating NGOs grew up, too. As of October 2016, a total of 10 organizations are on duty:

1. **Stanislav Human Rights Group** (Ivano-Frankivsk)
2. **Volyn Oblast NGO “Center of Legal Aid”** (Kovel)
3. **Charitable Foundation “Rozvytok”** (Mukachevo)
4. **NGO “Dvorichna Rural Communities Foundation”**
(Dvorichna village, Kharkiv region)
5. **Information Resource Center “Legal Space”** (Kherson)
6. **NGO “Kamenets-Podolsky Lawyers Association”**
7. **Podillia Center for Human Rights** (Vinnitsia)
8. **NGO “MART”** (Chernihiv)
9. **Civic Platform** (Sievierodonetsk, Rubizhne, Lysychansk
Luhansk region)
10. **Chuhuiv Human Rights Group** (Chuhuiv, Kharkiv region)

The increased dynamics of requests in 2014-2016 proves a great demand and need for such service in Ukraine.

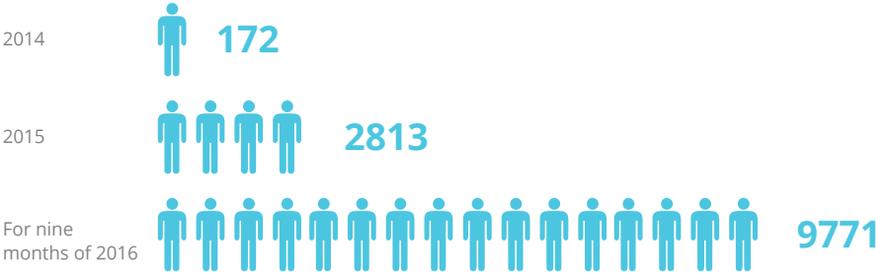
STATISTICS OF THE REQUESTS DURING NINE MONTHS OF 2015.



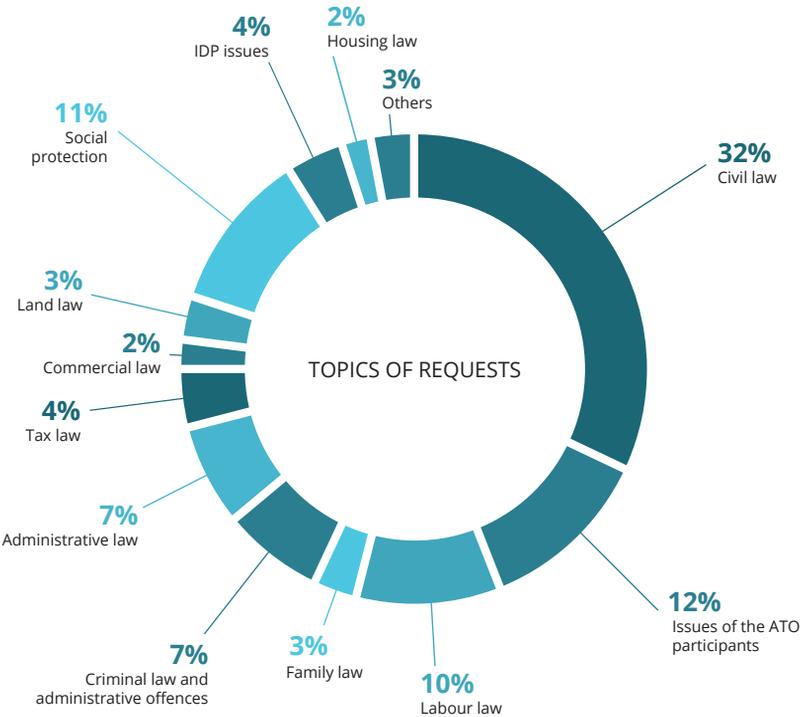
The graph shows that during the first year of online legal aid provision, the number of requests has increased tenfold. While during the first months of the chat, only 30-40 online consultations were provided per month, and in September 2015, it increased to 420 per month. The demand for a service is also proved by over 2,000 views and 30 shares of a relevant entry on Facebook: <http://legalspace.org/en/activities/success-stories/item/5823-bezoplatnye-onlajn-konsultatsii-na-pravovom-prostore-byut-rekordy>.

Throughout 2016, the number of requests for online legal aid tripled to 1,200 per month.

Dynamics of requests for online advice in 2014-2016



TOPICS OF REQUESTS IN 2016:





Example of a request

In 2015, Andriy was serving on the frontline in the Donetsk region. Before being called up, he used to work in the Fozzy Group as a mechanic and receive an official salary. But during the last three months, as of November 2015, he did not receive his salary, even though the law obliges the employer to pay it.

When his wife Iryna contacted the employer, the administration explained that the social insurance office did not provide them with the necessary funds. Thus, she was recommended to deal with the officials herself. And those, in turn, sent the woman back to the accounting department of the company. She heard a lot of excuses, the officials shifted the responsibility on one another.

Then, Iryna contacted the Legal Space chat room asking for help. The duty lawyer explained the soldier's wife the mechanism of paying wages to the mobilized military personnel.

After the consultation on how to restore the abused rights and to maintain earnings for the soldiers, Iryna filed an oral complaint to the employer. And it did work. The employer agreed with the legitimacy of the complaint and started paying arrears of wages.

Professionalism of the lawyers is confirmed by the gratitude in the feedback of the service users. Here comes one example:



"A huge thanks to you, you were helpful in a pinch. Your help was very qualified, available and, most importantly, free of charge. You are doing a great and noble cause helping ordinary people, who think they are alone in their troubles. Thank you for treating me like a human being, and showing interest in achieving the result. I'd like to wish you good luck, success and growth in your professional activity! Best regards, the soldier's mom".

03

COOPERATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The efficiency and completeness of free legal aid which aims at creating equal opportunities for everyone to solve their life problems through legal means primarily depends on the network of institutions that provide free primary legal aid and the expansion of non-governmental agents that provide such aid.

Three models of providing free legal aid at the cost of local budget

The state undertook the responsibility to guarantee access to secondary legal aid at the expense of state budget. Funding the exercise of the right to free primary legal aid is delegated to communities, i.e. local authorities.

When it comes to shaping a sustainable system of primary legal aid, a lot is expected from the CSOs. This work should be aimed at establishing long-term partnership with existing public providers of free primary legal aid and expansion of the network of such institutions, involvement of local governments, legal entities and natural persons (experts into various fields of law). Transparency and quality standards in the provision of free primary legal aid are critical.

Setting up a high-quality system of free primary legal aid is beneficial both to the community residents and the government, because it is a real opportunity for citizens to receive adequate free legal aid to protect their violated or disputed rights, freedoms and interests and to exercise the right to access to justice guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine. For public authorities and local governments, it is a possibility to offload the work of their employees, as citizens would know specific authorities to seek assistance from, and public officials won't have to deny if they are not competent to make decisions in an issue raised by a claimant. It should be noted that the local community benefits from functional free legal aid system, as it helps to alleviate social tension in the community, increase trust to local authorities and improve the voters' trust to the elected officials.

The Law of Ukraine «On Free Legal Aid» assigned the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of the system of free primary legal aid to local authorities.



The Law provides for **three models** to provide free legal aid at the cost of local budgets: creating non-profit specialized municipal agencies, holding open competitions in the community and contract-based engagement of legal professionals (lawyers, attorneys, human rights activists).

The first model: **a specialized community institution**

The Empowerment of the Poor Initiative supported the establishment of a community institution “Center for Provision of Free Primary Legal Aid in Skadovsk City Council of Skadovsk district, Kherson region” (decision # 423 of Skadovsk City Council of 26.12.2012). Currently there are only two specialized community agencies in Ukraine of this kind – the Specialized institution for the provision of free primary legal aid in Odesa (decision # 2229-VI of Odesa City Council of 24.07.2012) and the one in Skadovsk.

Residents of Skadovsk and even residents of neighboring villages and districts are able to receive legal aid since June 2010. First, the Center’s activities were supported by the International Renaissance Foundation and the Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation. The city government provided a comfortable room and promised to fund the Center from the municipal budget. And it kept its word. Moreover, time showed that residents of Skadovsk badly needed such assistance and its benefits were quite tangible. In February 2013, the Center became a community institution. Its lawyers continued to provide free legal aid to reconcile “the warring parties”, to provide legal analysis of the documents adopted at the city level, etc.

It should be noted that an alternative to a community provider is the provision of free primary legal aid by private/non-governmental entities based on an open competition.

The second model: **an open competition**

In most cities of Ukraine, local budgets provide some funding to subsidize certain NGOs and civic initiatives. However, the majority of citizens in the community do not know how the beneficiary NGOs are selected, whether funds are spent effectively, and what positive changes took place at the community level. Allocating budget funds to the community priorities through an open and transparent rather than closed and manual mode is a promising perspective.

A competition is the most effective and popular mechanism of cooperation between local governments and communities.

The competition allows to:

- Effectively address socio-economic issues that are important to society;
- Mobilize the community to solve local problems and increase social activism rate;
- Establish effective cooperation between the LSG and NGOs;
- Collect and implement attractive proposals of applicants;
- Use the existing resources more efficiently;
- Improve attitudes of local territorial communities towards the LSG activities;
- Mobilize additional external sources to co-financing NGOs for providing free legal aid.

Competitions of social projects can make a change in the area of providing social services and social protection of the population.

The third model: **contract-based involvement of legal experts**

This model is very convenient for small communities. The vast majority of village councils have no lawyer in their staff, therefore, the contract-based involvement of lawyers can guarantee access to free legal aid for the villagers.



Regional experience of public tenders and fundraising from local budgets

Ratne village, Volyn region

On October 25, 2013, Ratne Village Council approved the Regulation on the procedure to engage private legal entities to provide free primary legal aid.

This Regulation was a product of cooperation between the staff of the Law Community Center in Kovel set up on the basis of Volyn regional NGO “Center of Legal Aid”, and members and officials of Ratne Village Council. This event was preceded by the adoption of the Rural Legal Education Program for 2014-2016 which provides for the possibility to engage private free legal aid providers at the expense of the budget funds.



*“The adopted Regulation allows to set up an accessible and sustainable system of providing free legal aid to every citizen of the village of Ratne”, said **Olena Matviychuk**, the Project Manager of Creation and Implementation of a System of Free Primary Legal Aid in Volyn Region Project. “Now, when the budget of the Village Council for 2014 is being drafted, our job is to convince the council members to allocate funds to this initiative. We are defending the idea at the budget committee, so that more funds are available for the provision of free primary legal aid. We keep justifying the need to allocate these funds for efficient provision of free primary legal aid in the village of Ratne”.*

The budget of Ratne Village Council for 2014 was adopted in February 2014. It inter alia allocated funding for the Program of legal education of popula-

tion in 2014-2016, stipulating the possibility of engaging private free legal aid providers at the expense of the budget funds. A total of UAH 12,000 was allocated to this Program with is a quite considerable amount for the village council budget. And this is a real success, because local government did not only declare its willingness to support the provision of free legal aid, but also allocated funds for it. The lawyers of Kovel Law Community Center at Volyn Center of Legal Aid managed to establish cooperation with local authorities and to explain the importance of the initiative to the village head, Council members and staff. It establishes legal ground to develop an accessible and sustainable system of free legal aid provision to every citizen in the village.

Ulianivka village, Kherson region

In the summer of 2014, Ulianivka Village Council was the first of 13 councils in Skadovsk district of Kherson region to adopt the Procedure of engaging private free primary legal aid providers. A total of seven village councils of the district that are about to create grounds for that are next in line. The Law Community Center at Skadovsk regional NGO "Skadovsk is My Native Land" were working on that for near four years. Established in 2010, the Center started providing free legal aid to local residents with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. Advice, drafting statements of claim, following-up the cases of residents in the courts were in great demand. In addition, the Center's specialists helped the local authorities to develop legal acts and even managed to reduce the burden on the employees of the city administration, because residents get used to seek assistance from them. The Center boosted its reputation through disseminating information about the cases won among the residents. Since the activities of the Center depended on funding, the city of Skadovsk and the council members supported the idea to set up a community enterprise "Skadovsk Center for Legal Aid" which is fully funded by the City Council. Interestingly, that was the first experience of this kind in Ukraine. To sum up, since 2013, the lawyers of the Center started to provide free legal aid within the framework of the community institution. For a long time, the public authorities of Skadovsk and the Center's lawyers had to prove that everything was in line with the law. Letters were received from the Prosecutor-General and the Ministry of Justice to highlight importance of the Center.

In April 2014, local residents spoke up in favor of the Centre at the City Council session. The council members supported this initiative.

Evidently, the Center's activities were not limited to the city of Skadovsk. Activists worked closely with the heads of village councils of Skadovsk district. Residents of nearby villages had the opportunity to seek legal aid from the LCC lawyers who continued to work in the district supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. Furthermore, given the lack of a lawyer in the Executive Committee and the Village Council, the lawyers repeatedly provided legal aid to staff and heads of village councils. Such cooperation and good feedback from the leadership of the City Council yielded positive results: eight of 13 village councils provided written confirmation of their willingness to cooperate.

But how can this cooperation be implemented? Which option for the provision of free legal aid is to be selected in the small village councils? The village heads who saw an opportunity to bring legal aid to villagers weighed the options. It turned out that it was impossible to keep a private community institution in every village council with meager budgets. Thus, they came to the conclusion that the best vehicle to sustain the right of residents of rural communities to free legal aid is to competitively engage private providers.

Kherson

On September 12, 2014, the Kherson City Council adopted the decision requiring the city government to develop the regulation on the provision of free primary legal aid provision and allocate funds for it from the city budget starting from 2015.

It was the persistence of Kherson regional office of the Committee of Voters of Ukraine that helped to compel the city authorities to pay attention to this issue and made the City Council to adopt this decision. Human rights defendants had to set up a coalition of NGOs and put a lot of effort to get the members of City Council do it. The draft decision on the provision of free primary legal aid developed by human rights defenders has been tabled with the Kherson City Council in July-August 2014.



“Actually, we started engaging with the members of City Council about this project much earlier – more than a year ago”, told the Head of Kherson regional office of the Committee of Voters of Ukraine **Dementii Bilyi**. *“First, they did not support our arguments. We carried out individual work with the authorities, urged, argued, our experts spoke at the City Council commissions...”*

However, during the regular commission session in early September the project was rejected. The Council members made several important claims when discussing it. In particular, they did not like the fact that the project should be financed from the city budget. The lawyer of the LCC Oleksandr Tokarenko responded with the following arguments: first, it does not deal with the financial component so far; secondly, he reminded that the local governments should fund the provision of such an aid pursuant to the Law of Ukraine. He received a skeptical response that according to the law, education in Ukraine shall be free – but in fact, it's not the case. Some vague arguments against the project were also voiced by the members of the City Land Commission.

Experts of the Coalition of NGOs did not give up. In the end of the day, the perseverance of human rights defenders worked out: on September, 12, 2014 the Kherson City Council adopted the decision requiring the city government to develop the regulation on the provision of free primary legal aid provision and allocate funds for it from the city budget. In addition, the Commission set up by the City Council had to announce a competition among legal entities willing to provide free-of-charge legal aid to people at the expense of the city budget.

Evidently, this is only the first step of Kherson human rights defenders to the main goal: the Law on free primary legal aid has to be fully implemented at the local level. It should be noted that Kherson residents are free to receive such an aid in two Law Community Centers that operate in the city since 2009: Kherson regional office of the Committee of Voters of Ukraine and Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation.

Kherson Roma Center

In the autumn of 2014, the International Roma NGO “Ketane” opened the Center of free legal aid to Roma. Kherson Center provides aid on all legal matters, primarily helping internally displaced persons of Roma origin, provides free legal advice, assistance in obtaining identity documents, interacting with law enforcement authorities, public authorities, etc.

During the first phase of the project that started in October this year, the Center continued the organizational work with volunteers and participants. The project engages with the Council of national minorities of Kherson and Kherson City Roma Society. As a result, they decided to visit the district centers of Kherson region (Bilozerka, Vysokopillia, Hola Prystan districts, cities of Beryslav and Tsiuriupinsk) and made a schedule of trips from 14-28 November. During the visits, the organizers present the Center, explain how it can help the Roma, and give people information sheets developed by the Center. Moreover, that specialists of the Center developed a questionnaire that helped to find out what issues are of interest to Roma, study their relationships with local authorities and law enforcement agencies. On-site meetings were attended by the representatives of local governments, the internal affairs, and the media. As a result of visits, a list of persons who require legal support in these settlements was made. Staff of the Center prepares the reference notes based on the data obtained from the authorities on how many Roma sought advice from various public authorities for advice and on how documents are issued to them.

Chernihiv

On the first day of October, 2014, Chernihiv District Rada adopted an important decision for local residents. The Council members adopted the Program of legal education and provision of free primary legal aid in Chernihiv district for 2014-2016.

This progressive decision is the result of cooperation between the staff of Legal Community Center at Chernihiv Public Committee of Human Rights Protection along with members and secretariat of the District Council.

In fact, the Program reinforces the work supported for several years by the LCC at the district level and local communities with the financial support of the International Renaissance Foundation. This is both legal education and the provision of free primary legal aid to residents of the district. Coordination of the Program is provided by the working group, which includes representatives of the LCC – the Head Viktor Tarasov and the lawyer Natalia Piddubna.



*“The Program provides an opportunity to set up an accessible and effective system of providing free legal aid to each resident of Chernihiv district”, said the Head of the Center **Viktor Tarasov**. “This will be one of important steps to promptly establish a self-sufficient system of free legal aid in the district, including at the expense of local budget. The same takes place at the level of rural communities. Today, the Memoranda of cooperation with five village councils of Chernihiv district have been signed”.*

Thus, Chernihiv human rights activists managed to establish cooperation with local authorities, resulting in the system of free legal aid to residents of Chernihiv district. The next challenge is to hand down this experience to other districts and local communities in the region. This will improve the level of legal awareness raising of the public, facilitate access to legal aid, get the citizens knowledgeable about their rights and freedoms, and give people the opportunity to protect their violated rights.

Bila Tserkva, Kyiv region

The LLC provides free legal aid and advice to the residents of Bila Tserkva, Kyiv region, since 2007. The lawyers of the Center advise local residents and residents of Bila Tserkva district. At the beginning of 2014, Bila Tserkva City Council for the first time launched an open competition to ensure citizens’ access to free legal aid. Such a competition proves the understanding of legal needs of the residents, the recognizing that high-quality free legal aid should be provided to them.

To fulfill the requirements of the Law, Bila Tserkva City Council announced an open competition among providers of free legal services in the city. The winner was the NGO «Legal Unity», on the basis of which the LCC operates. It repeatedly received small funding from the city budget.

Such decision is a result of a long-term partnership between the Bila Tserkva LCC and Bila Tserkva City Council. Winning the competition was preceded by lengthy negotiations with the Council members, periodic working meetings with the committees of the City Council, roundtable on the presentation of the activities of the Center. Further, the decision of the Bila Tserkva City Council # 1163-56-4 of 13.02.2014 adopted the Program of engaging private legal entities to provide free primary legal aid in Bila Tserkva in 2014 with funding from the local budget in the amount of UAH 15,000. The specialists of the Center joined the working group for drafting documents which became the legal basis for the open and transparent competition.

The same program for 2015-2018 was adopted next year, with funding in the amount of UAH 28,000 for the winning competitor in 2015 was allocated.



“Now the process of local budgeting for 2016 takes place, so our organization has been involved in this process and will continue to advocate for the increased funding for this program and transparent system for engaging private legal entities and non-governmental organizations to provide free primary legal aid in Bila Tserkva”, said the LCC Head **Olga Nastina**.

Novoaidar, Luhansk region

In 2014, the lawyers from Novoaidar in Luhansk region joined the all-Ukrainian network of Centers. In addition to legal advice, the staff of the new Center provides consultations, including to people with disabilities and victims of the armed conflict. The Center also collects electronic database, through which people will be able to look for job and receive humanitarian aid.

The Center provides free legal aid to residents of the Novoaidar district since early October 2014. The lawyers advise local residents and internally displaced persons on property and land rights, registration of documents

for obtaining IDP status, social benefits and subsidies. Since November, the Center extends field consultations in remote villages and settlements in Lutuhyne, Starobilsk, and Novoaidar districts. Special focus during the visits is made on the people with disabilities and victims of the armed conflict. For the convenience of beneficiaries, such consultations are often organized directly at the place of residence of the elderly, people with disabilities, as well as in the clubs, schools and other community institutions where they could come.

At the same time, since the end of November 2014, employees of the Center carry out public opinion survey regarding the main problems of the residents of Lutuhyne, Starobilsk, and Novoaidar districts. Their focus includes: the main problems of the residents in these districts; trust and quality of work of law enforcement agencies; basic directions of recovery of the district and the city; and what types of free legal aid people need from the Center.

Moreover, the Center created the electronic database of jobs and opportunities for humanitarian aid. The database is constantly updated due to the cooperation with volunteers and regional authorities. Every resident in Lutuhyne, Starobilsk, and Novoaidar districts and the city of Pervomaik can contact the Center to obtain necessary advice on job search, jobs available in the district and city, and to receive the humanitarian aid from the government or volunteers.

Despite the difficult conditions caused by the hostilities in Luhansk region, Novoaidar LCC provides advice to local residents and is working on setting up a system of free legal aid in the district. Thus, at the end of May 2015, Novoaidar District Council adopted the district target Program of provision of free legal aid in 2015. This decision was initiated by the LCC at Luhansk NGO «Public Legal Aid» and developed by legal experts. The Program aims to competitively engage private providers of primary legal aid to the district residents. This activity will be carried out in line with the Procedure and criteria for engaging private providers of primary legal aid approved by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. Public experts expect that the Program will start within a month.



«The adoption of this document is an important step in establishing an effective and sustainable system of free legal aid in the community. Our next steps are to actively contribute to program implementation, build the capacity of lawyers in Novoaidar district and improve legal awareness of local population», said the Head of the NGO “Public Legal Aid” **Maksym Danilchenko**.

Rubizhne, Luhansk region

The multifunctional center in Rubizhne which started its activities in October 2015 was set up on the basis of local LCC with the support of the UN Development Program. From now on, people receive the legal aid, and psychological help. A total of 5-10 persons per week seek psychologist's advice. The most prevalent problem is the posttraumatic stress disorder. Moreover, such assistance is often demanded by women, probably because of their greater sensibility and the need to share their burning issues, commented the staff of the Center.

One of the new activities of the Center in Rubizhne is supervising the supply and distribution of humanitarian aid. The Center's staff and volunteers contribute to it, in particular among IDPs, and coordinate the turnout of humanitarian aid in cooperation with local authorities, guided by the official lists of registered IDPs.

As earlier, free legal aid remains the most popular type of assistance: such requests to the Center count to 30-40 per week. The project lawyer Serhii Shpilievych advises internally displaced persons who often need to recover their documents, helps to collect papers for the registration of social benefits, pensions. Often people ask just to give some coordinates, because local authorities moved from their usual premises.

The Center also plans to use its new multi-functional format to carry out activities for the restoration of the city life. Rubizhne should be restored with the joint efforts. In the current environment, it is necessary to consider the very different attitudes of society. It is very important to establish a dialogue between people, according to the staff of the Center. Therefore, they plan to conduct psychological trainings and workshops to promote reconciliation of the opposing parties.



*"Our today's job is to expand the range of services of the Center and adapt them to current problems of society", summed up **Serhii Koshel**, "I hope that the specialists of the Center will help local people to improve their psychological well-being and get back to normal life".*

Uzhhorod, Zakarpattia region

In August 2014, another LCC was opened at Zakarpattia Regional Charity Foundation “Romano Lungo Trio” in Uzhhorod. Specialists of the Center provide free legal aid to the Roma community in the villages of Kholmok, Kontsovo and Uzhhorod. The first step was the meeting with Roma community in the village of Kholmok. The project team went to the Roma camp to learn their most urgent concerns.

In the early days since the start-up, more than 25 families contacted the Center with complicated matters, such as registration of residence, obtaining a passport, housing privatization, and allocation of land.

The newly-established Law Community Center is the third one in Zakarpattia. Thanks to these institutions, even more Roma are able to benefit from legal aid and exercise their rights which still remained a challenge for them.

Lysychansk, Luhansk region

A new NGO “Social initiatives on Labor and Health Care” joined the all-Ukrainian LCC Network. Lysychansk Center began its operation on November 3. The project implemented by this NGO with the support of International Renaissance Foundation is entitled “Legal support of the population – a pledge of peace and stable development of Lysychansk”. This is consistent with the current difficult situation in the city located in the ATO zone. The specificity of work of the Center is directly related to it. So do the main concerns with which the residents of Lysychansk and internally displaced persons contact the Center.



*“A lot of internally displaced persons and individuals who find themselves in a difficult financial situation seek advice”, said the project director **Vadym Sharko**. “Among the latter are not only IDPs from the ATO zone, but also local residents. Most of the problems people have are caused by the occupation of the city by armed groups and the effects of ATO. After all, the outskirts of Lysychansk saw hostilities with destructions, thefts, stolen vehicles”.*

The Center advises on issues of civil and commercial law. People contact the lawyers of the Center with questions about the property rights, documents, places of shelter or residence, labor rights, social benefits, and subsidies. Lawyers help solve problems that are typical, especially for people from low-income, large families, etc. Due to financial difficulties they could not afford legal services before. Now the Center can handle all of such needs. And they are many: according to Vadym’s forecasts, for over 7 months of the project implementation (until May 2015), the Center plans to provide free consultations to 600 people.

Regulations on the procedure of engaging private providers of free legal aid and the city or village legal education programs, other target program of providing primary free legal aid have been already developed in the city of Mukachevo of Zakarpattia region, Dvorichna village of Kharkiv region, Kamenka-Buh, Peremyshliany and Zhovkva City Councils in Lviv region, and in the city of Khmelnytskyi.

Citizens’ access to high-quality legal aid allows to establish and develop social ties in the community, enables community to make important decisions and to enhance their ability to protect themselves with legal methods.

Dvorichna district, Kharkiv region

Legal isolation of vulnerable people caused by the lack of access to legal services for rural residents was a long-standing problem in Dvorichna district of Kharkiv region. No single Village Council has a lawyer, so legal issues were handled by the Network Office. The fruitful cooperation between the NGO “Dvorichna Rural Communities Foundation” and the District Council supported by the International Renaissance Foundation in 2014 resulted in the establishment of the Law Community Center to protect the rights of Dvorichna district residents. It conducted a series of advocacy events (meetings with members of councils and representatives of the district administration and Village Councils, round tables, workshops, etc.), established contacts with the commissions of the District Council. The target Program “Provision of Legal Aid to the Residents of Dvorichna District in 2014-2018” was developed and supported by the members of the District Council. The program is jointly funded by the District Council and nine of 13 Village Councils of Dvorichna district. The total amount of funding from local budgets in 2016 amounted to UAH 80,000. The effort to ensure sustainable funding of the Program is ongoing.

In addition to primary free legal aid, the Network Office also runs monthly workshops for representatives of the district and 13 Village Councils on the following topics:

- How to register the inheritance rights with local authorities;
- Military draft registration in Village Councils;
- Powers of local authorities on drawing up administrative documents;
- Procedure of assignment and change of email addresses;
- Introduction of electronic public procurement system (ProZorro);
- Procedure of addressing requests for the access to public information;
- Powers of the prosecution bodies concerning the requests for information submitted to local authorities;
- Procedure of registration of regulatory acts of local authorities.

The team of the NGO “Dvorichna Rural Communities Foundation” consists of **Vitaliy Babyka**, **Halyna Turbaba**, and **Liudmyla Kovtun**.

04

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A NETWORK

In 2015-2016, we developed and adopted the Code of Ethics and all the essential policies and procedures for the Association, and held three strategic planning sessions. We are continuing to work on the Activity Standards.

During strategic planning of the Network activities, we prioritized three strategic areas of work and specified them in the strategic plan for 2016-2018:

Empowerment of citizens

The objective is to create a critical mass of people who know their rights, are able and motivated to exercise them.

Expert and legal support to the communities

The objective is to create conditions for building capacity of citizens and territorial communities to solve their problems by legal methods.

Institutional capacity of the Network

The objective is a well-developed, cohesive, sustainable coalition of civil society organizations working for the public interest.

The strategic orientations

1. Empowerment of citizens



The objective

is to create a critical mass of people who know their rights, are able and motivated to exercise them.

Accessible legal aid without social and territorial restrictions. No restrictions on the provision of legal aid to vulnerable populations.

Ensuring continued access to FLA (free legal aid) in remote settlements through the development of the institute of paralegals (legal consultants for whom the law is not a primary occupation).

“ALWAYS A STEP AHEAD”:

- Comprehensive, holistic approach to solving client problems – focus on their needs.
- Proactive approach – forecasting the problems before they happen, development and delivery of preventive information campaigns.



“SERVICES FOR EVERYONE”:

- Alternative approaches and tools for conflict resolution (restorative practices, mediation, etc.).
- “Emergency Legal Aid”, online legal advice, wide application of ITS to deliver legal services and legal education.
- High-quality legal aid in cases of conflict with state authorities.



2. Expert and legal support to the communities



The objective

is to create conditions for building capacity of citizens and territorial communities to solve their problems by legal methods.

- Development of capable communities by providing expert and legal support;
- Mapping social problems: identification of problems in society, involvement of the Network in problem solving.

- Training programs for local governments to build their capacity to efficiently and responsibly perform their functions.
- A communication platform for the effective solution of problems of society in a legal way.
- Techniques of legal innovations in the community.
- Expert support to the processes of change in society for developing the responsible communities.
- Compilation and analysis of experience to create recipes and recommendations for the prevention and resolution of social problems.

3. Institutional capacity of the Network



The objective

is a well-developed, cohesive, sustainable coalition of civil society organizations working for the public interest.

Institutional capacity development of the Network:

- A platform for mutual learning and experience sharing;
- Established system of internal communication;
- Financial sustainability.

The platform for developing products for local authorities and communities: the Network has enough capacity to offer high-quality products to local authorities and communities.

Civic monitoring (assessment) of the public free legal aid system: qualitative feedback regarding activities of the Legal Aid Bureau.

Development and optimization of FPLA standards: the Network is capable of developing standards regarding the provision of FPLA, and thus increasing the quality of services.

05

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ART

One of the important unique areas of our work is human rights and the art. We have created a cycle of documentaries «New Heroes». Currently it consists of six movies.



THE VILLAGE OF STARA ZBURYVKA, KHERSON REGION, HOLA PRYSTAN DISTRICT

«The New Heroes»

These are three documentary portraits of ordinary Ukrainians. Each of them has his or her own story, but there is something in common – their struggle against injustice in the country today.

A story to be continued

Regional officials illegally handed out 29 hectares of Stara Zburyivka community best lands to figureheads. In 2009, the Head of the Village Council Victor Maruniak, who had sued them in court, was jailed. Rural residents united and set up the Committee for Stara Zburyivka self-defense and began to defend their rights and rights of the Village Council Head. The investigation failed to prove Victor Maruniak's guilt, no fraudulent charges were confirmed, and under the pressure of community he was released. Freedom, honor and dignity of the leader of the rural community was also defended by the Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation, Kherson Association of Journalists "Pivden" and the newspaper "Vgoru" that joined and coordinated actions of the Ukrainian human rights community and colleagues from foreign countries – a total of 87 NGOs from different coun-

tries sent letters to the President of Ukraine to advocate for Victor Maruniak. Thanks to them, this story received wide attention. Despite the resistance and threats of the district officials, Village Council members voted for the return of Victor Maruniak to the lead. All the while he continued to fight for the stolen community lands. During the elections of 2010 and 2014, Maruniak was re-elected as the Village Council Head. While the entire story lasted, the rural community changed a lot.

The story of this transformation inspired young artists to create a new full-length movie. In 2015, the documentary “Ukrainian Sheriffs” was shot.

This is three documentary portraits of ordinary Ukrainians. Each of them has his/her own story, but has something in common – their struggle against injustice in the country today.

Between the world and war

How was the full-length documentary «Ukrainian Sheriffs» shot?

What is happening now, when people in the village need to call the police? They do not do it, because they don't trust the police. Instead of coming to call, the police usually begins to complain about the lack of gas, ask to pay for fuel. And when they arrive, they start to extract money for gas from the one who called. They also solicit money from another side – who was the reason of the call – for not working on the claim. And then, feeling that their job is done, the police return to their base. In the regions, the old police was not replaced with the new one. The same persons are still there.

Sheriffs are local residents, neighbors, and colleagues. These are sheriffs who are called in critical situations, because they never do the outrage typical to the police. The community has an understanding of the work sheriffs perform in rural areas.

The “Ukrainian Sheriffs” (project made in cooperation with Latvia and Germany) was premiered at the 13th Human Rights Documentary Film Festival Docudays UA on 26 March 2016 in Kyiv.

The resident of Kherson Roman Bondarchuk has long been known in Ukraine and abroad as a documentary filmmaker. While his previous works were “shorts”, the “Ukrainian Sheriffs” is his first feature-length documentary.



PICTURE FROM THE "UKRAINIAN SHERIFFS"

“

*“First we planned to make a film about the self-organization of people in Stara Zburyivka”, told **Daria Averchenko**, “About the life, where there is no police and no medical care, so you can die before you manage to call the police or doctors. But there is a smart, educated, intelligent Village Head Victor Maruniak and two brave, smart and effective community inspectors (people in the village call them “our sheriffs”, and it gave the name to the movie): Viktor Kryvoborodov and Volodymyr Rudkovskyi. They are the “ambulance” and the police, and the peacemakers in the family and neighborhood conflicts. We also made an amazing story of a homeless guy Kolka, who came to the village. It is striking how the Head of the village (such “a big man”) respectfully treated him, asked about his plans and any help he needed. And this man was given a chance to start a normal life: he was allocated an empty house, tools, and seedlings for the garden... Then there was the Maidan in Kyiv. And when we watched the material made in the summer, before the Maidan, and the second part made after the Maidan – those were two different movies. Our heroes live “in the boonies”, but they were affected by the strong upper storm. There were no hostilities there, but people had to cope with the war. In the village, there is a little of everything,*

even their own separatist. We understood that the village was a small model of the big world, that this was a movie about the entire Ukraine. And I'm sure that such "sheriffs" are the mainstay of the whole country".

The documentary won a special jury prize at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). It tells how the life of the small southern village of Stara Zburyivka changed since the beginning of war. The project is co-produced by Ukraine, Latvia and Germany.

The jury consisting of famous directors and producers Johnathan Rosenbaum, Barbara Visher, Anna Polyak, Maite Alberdi and Laurent Bécue-Renard awarded the documentary with the following wording: "This film is exciting and full of humor, a universal portrait of a community that tries to adjust the daily discontent and misunderstanding and to keep peace through innovation, patience and common sense. Direction and camera-work in combination with incidentality of the story represent the life of Ukrainian village in details between long traditions and the upcoming war".



"I believe, this very important victory of Ukrainian movie is that it is a calm and balanced story about everyday life, not on barricades and in military trenches. This creates a more voluminous idea of modern Ukrainian cinema", **Vitaliy Manskiy**, the President of the Artdocfest, the main opposition Russian documentary film festival, congratulated the crew with the victory.



"The award by the most prestigious documentary film festival IDFA is the recognition of not only the absolutely outstanding cinematic work by Roman Bondarchuk, but a definite attention to what is happening in Ukraine, support to the Ukrainian people. Using the example of life in Stara Zburyivka and its extraordinary residents, the director managed to convey the indomitable will of the Ukrainian people, its identity and optimism", said **Mariana Kaat**, director, producer and author of famous Ukrainian film "The Mine # 8" which premiered at Docudays UA in 2012.



«Assol»

The story began with the tragic events of 2009, when Somali pirates seized the Ariadne vessel with Ukrainian crew aboard. Family members of sailors from Odesa banded together to rescue their loved ones. What was first a common tragedy and then a victory united people to set up the Sailors Support Foundation “Assol” in Odesa.



«The Southern Border»

In the spring of 2014, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine and annexed the Crimean Peninsula. In the East, Russia started the undeclared war against Ukraine. At that time, the Ukrainian army was practically destroyed by the pro-Russian regime which Russia had supported in Ukraine. Since the first days of Russian aggression, volunteers and social activists started the movement for reanimating Ukrainian army. They raised money, foods and clothes to provide soldiers with necessary supplies.

The situation in Southern Ukraine, in Kherson region, is very intense because there is still a threat of Russian invasion from Crimea. Kherson Center of Military Aid unites many activists, who work persistently and tirelessly for the victory. The filmmakers set out for a journey.



«Rotation»

Over six months, the fighters of 13th Chernihiv battalion are on a front line under constant shelling from Russia. Soldiers' relatives contacted Chernihiv human rights defenders to make joint effort to make the military leadership to rotate the battalion. They get together and record a video message to the President hoping to be heard.

All movies with English subtitles can be viewed at: <http://legalspace.org/en/video/documentaries-about-human-rights-in-ukraine>

06

SUCCESS STORIES

During the Network activities, a total of 472 success stories and 72 other cases were published on the Legal Space web portal. They show the impact of legal aid on the lives of individuals, help solve the community problems and influence the situation in Ukraine as a whole.

1.

Lawyers help residents of Novoaidar who suffered from war



Novoaidar,
Luhansk region



Property rights

The war brought double tragedy to a family from Luhansk. Free legal aid became the heaven-sent opportunity for the widow that was alone with her troubles without a roof over her head and without a penny in the pocket.

Liubov Boiko* contacted **Novoaidar Legal Development Network** office in August 2016 with a request to receive a compensation for her destroyed house. She explained that in January 2015 during the military operations a direct hit destroyed her family house. A week after, she suffered another tragedy – her husband died.

Gradually recovering from these disasters, a woman began to think how and where to live. But the title to the house was issued to her husband, and she could not register the property in the order of succession because she had no money for that.

The lawyer at the office of Luhansk regional NGO “Public Service of Legal Aid” **Tetiana Hanshyna** explained all the details of the situation during the consultation. As it turned out, Liubov appealed to the private notary office for consultation regarding the inheritance of property and found out that there was a possibility of drawing up the inheritance case. The lawyer helped her to write a statement to the private notary for documents, confirming her right to inherit the real estate. After application to the notary, a woman received the certificate of the right to inherit property of her deceased husband and could confirm her right to financial aid in the local military and civil administration.



LAWYER OF LUHANSK REGIONAL NGO "PUBLIC SERVICE OF LEGAL AID" **TETIANA HANSHYNA**

Office of the Legal Development Network in Novoaidar provides free legal aid to the victims of war and internally displaced persons at the address: **2 Nezalezhnosti Street, Novoaidar, Luhansk region.**

Visiting hours: **Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9 am to 4 pm.**

** Names are changed for ethical reasons.*

2.

How a child from the occupied Crimea became an Ukrainian citizen



Bilozerka,
Kherson region



Access to justice

Bilozerka district court considered the case of Crimean citizen Daryna on the recognition of the fact of birth of her child for four and a half months. The boy, who was born in September of last year in Simferopol, became a Ukrainian citizen after his mother had asserted this right in court.

In October 2015, Andrii addressed **Bilozerka Law Community Center**. He told that he and his wife Daryna were still the citizens of Ukraine, although they were permanently living in Crimea. On 11 September 2015, their son was born. The parents received a birth certificate from the Office of registration of the acts of civil status in Crimea*. Could they imagine then that they would face problems in Ukraine caused by the certificate issued on the territory of the occupied Crimea?

A young dad told the lawyer of the Center **Liudmyla Zagorovska** that in October he and his wife and their newborn son had come to Daryna's parents in Ukraine. They did not plan to stay long. After all, Andriy had a job in Russia and a young mother with a baby planned to live in Simferopol.

However, they failed to go to the Crimea again. The family was stopped at the checkpoint. The family appealed to the Office of registration of the acts of civil status of Bilozerka district department of justice of Kherson region requesting to change the birth certificate issued by the Russian Federation with Ukrainian birth certificate. However, such a change is not stipulated by the effective Ukrainian legislation. In this case, they had to go to court.



LAWYER OF BILOZERKA YOUTH CENTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT **LIUDMYLA ZAGOROVSKA**

The lawyer of Bilozerka Center Liudmyla Zagorovska helped to draw up the relevant claim to the court. Similar cases were already considered by courts of the first instance in other regions of Ukraine. But the judge of Bilozersky district court considered such a case for the first time.

At the end of November 2015, Daryna received the court decision which refused to open proceedings in this case. A woman came to Bilozerka Center again. The lawyer of the Center helped Daryna to immediately file a complaint to the Court of Appeals of Kherson region. Finally, the Court of Appeals upheld the requirements set out in the complaint and referred the case back to the court of the first instance for reconsideration.

On March 1, the judge of Bilozerka district court re-examined the case and satisfied the claims of the applicant. The court decision entered into force.

During the consideration of Daryna's case, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine "On amendments to the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine regarding establishment of the fact of birth and death of persons on the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine" It establishes that such cases shall be considered urgently by courts and executed immediately after the announcement of the decision.

3.

A retiree won his right to wage in the court



Bilozerka,
Kherson region



Labor rights

For about a year, the court of the first instance the Court of Appeals in Kherson region considered a case about a wage, calculation of severance, payment of average wage during a delay of payments at dismissal and remedy of moral harm.

In May 2015, a resident of the village of Bilozerka Yurii requested **Bilozerka Law Community Center** to help him to recover his unpaid wage after he was dismissed from the Electromash enterprise in the city of Kherson along with the re-imbursment of the unused vacation.

Yurii left this company in early March 2015 when he retired.

Since the client did not know the exact amount of debt, the lawyer of the center **Liudmyla Zagorovska** initially helped Yurii to write a request to the Director asking him to provide information on the amount of unpaid wage and re-imbursment of the unused leave, as well as to pay this money. However, the Electromash administration ignored these requirements. There was no response to the registered letter.

Next, the lawyer helped Yurii to make a claim to Suvorovsky district court in the city Kherson on calculation of severance, payment of average wage during a delay of payments at dismissal and remedy of moral harm. The approximate calculation of amounts of wage arrears was annexed to the statement of claim.

In December 2015, the court of the first instance issued a deci-

sion partially granting the plaintiff's requirement (the judgment suggested smaller amounts of wage arrears than stated in the claim while the requirement of remedy of moral harm has been satisfied in full).

The employer appealed the decision of the district court.

So, Yurii turned back to **Bilozerka Law Community Center**. The lawyer of the Center helped to write and timely file an objection to the appeal of the employer.

Because of the employer, the hearings were repeatedly postponed until June 2016, when the Court of Appeals of Kherson region decided to reject the appeal of the defendant and upheld the decision of Suvorovsky district court.

Yurii shared his experience of participating in the trial with Bilozerka LCC (he represented his interests in the court independently); currently, he hopes that the enterprise will comply with the decision of the court and return him the money.

4.

Stanytsia-Luhanska Law Community Center: residents of the ATO zone receive legal aid



Stanytsia-Luhanska, Luhansk region



Access to justice

Two legal information events and the reception of citizens were held in ATO zone by lawyers of Stanytsia-Luhanska LCC in May-June 2016. Aid was provided to the residents of the villages of Shyrokyi, Nyzhnia Vilkhova and Teple, Luhansk region.

THE FAMILY LAW ISSUES PREVAILED IN SHYROKYI

A total of 12 persons attended legal information meeting on May 26 in the Village Council and the local library.

*"11 citizens with a total of 13 issues applied for individual assistance", told the Head of LCC **Mykola Phillipov**. "Most of the applications concerned family matters, including divorce, division of property and real estate. The issues are rather complicated: missed deadlines, missing documents. Therefore, the assistance was provided in the form of consultations based on the excerpts from legislation and writing applications to the relevant authorities".*

Three questions concerned the breach of contractual relations between the gas provider and Ukrtelecom. The Center's lawyer Oleksandr Levenets helped to make statements to the appropriate authorities requesting to substantiate the claims.



THE LAWYER OF STANYTSIA-LUHANSKA LCC **OLEKSANDR LEVENETS** ADVISES THE RESIDENT OF THE VILLAGE IN NYZHNNIA VILHOVA.

The lawyer provided advice on the matters of retirement, criminal and social protection.

During the meeting, clients also worried why the Laws of Ukraine “On Temporary Measures in the ATO Zone”, “On Appeals of Citizens” and others were not implemented. Lawyers told about dissemination of information and legal aid in Ukraine, operation of Stanytsia-Luhanska LCC and opening hours for the citizens in the district. The residents also learned how they can remotely receive useful information and free legal aid through the services of the Legal Space website.

ISSUES OF INHERITANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY DOMINATED IN NYZHNNIA VILKHOVA

The legal event in Nyzhnnia Vilkhova community took place on 9 June in the premises of the village library. It included personal reception of citizens and awareness raising involving the Head of the library Lidia Tsubenko.



HEAD OF STANYTSIA-LUHANSKA LAW COMMUNITY CENTER **MYKOLA PHILLIPOV** WITH THE LIBRARY PERSONNEL NEAR THE LEGAL INFORMATION BOOTH.

In addition to information about the opportunities and services provided by the library, people learned that a legal information booth was installed there with the support of International Renaissance Foundation (see picture); they also talked about the system of free legal aid in Ukraine and Stanytsia-Luhanska district in particular.

In the village of Teple, lawyers both provided consultations to those who came for legal aid and visited a disabled person who has a status of the child of war at his home.

5.

A bridge to tomorrow



Kherson region



Legal aid to the ATO participants and their families

A priest and a psychologist wearing the military uniform, a few lawyers and human rights defenders – what can unite all these people? They visit together the districts of Kherson region and carry out psychological and legal seminars for the locals. They are united by one goal – to help ex-ATO combatants and their families. The editorial staff of the newspaper “Vgoru” joined one of such seminars in Henichesk.

The meeting in Henichesk was attended by a few couples, a few people who came from the front on leave, wives and grandparents of the men who are fighting in the ATO zone, and the officials who work with the combatants and volunteers. The conference room in the Department of Education was packed.

A Father **Andrii Kalyta**, the military chaplain, head of the Center for Spiritual Development “Source of Life” started the seminar. He told the story. When he was young, he wanted to make a military career. During one of the combat operations he participated in the release of the hostages. They saw in the optical sight what was happening in the building. One of the criminals held a knife to the throat of a child. But the order to fire did not come. Then the soldiers took the decision to start the operation. They managed to rescue a boy, the hostages were released, but Andrii’s best friend was seriously wounded. They requested a helicopter by the radio. But the answer was: “No helicopter in your area”. The guy did not survive. As soon as he arrived back to the unit, Andrii went to the commander and beat his face”. His military career ended.



PARTICIPANTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND LEGAL SEMINAR "IT IS ALL IN YOUR HANDS", HENICHESK, KHERSON REGION, MARCH 2016.

"TO BURN ONE'S PAIN OUT"

When the participants were shown the short film "Most" ("Bridge"), no one could keep tears. Some just couldn't stand it, turned away from the screen...

In Henichesk, this film was shown for the first time. It is short – only a few minutes – but very touching. It is incredibly painful to make such a choice, which was made by the protagonist to rescue hundreds of people – the price was his child's death. After going through deep grief, he was able to accept that the sacrifice was not in vain.

After that, each participant drew on a sheet of paper his or her own pain, clenched and burned. This exercise seems to be so simple, but it really soothes the aching heart and the world is getting brighter. Having survived the wrath and rejection of events through the pain and frustration, we come to the beginning of a new life.

Before the start of the second part of seminar, the Head of NGO "Volunteer" Yurii Shkalikov asked Father Andrii to help a soldier's wife. Her nerves are on edge, she does not stand the pressure, even tried to commit suicide. She has two young children.



LAWYER OF IRC “LEGAL SPACE” **VOLODYMYR ORLOVSKYI** TELLS ABOUT RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE ATO PARTICIPANTS

ALL IN YOUR HANDS

The second part of the seminar which was led by a lawyer of the Information Resource Center “Legal Space” **Volodymyr Orlovskiy**, started ... with yelling. And that’s OK, people have to express their negative emotions: our government and officials promised the ATO combatants too much and their promises were not actually fulfilled. Interestingly, when the soldiers and their families began to complain against the authorities one of the officials got up and began to report how much they do for them. It is exemplary, though, that Henichesk NGO “Volunteer” left the district ATO member Center. As the Head of NGO Yurii Shkalikov explained, the government only promises to provide assistance, but in reality it is “overlaid with paperwork and orders”. The last drop was the unexpected problem with allocating the room for the seminar. On its eve, the organizers were told to look for another place. Fortunately, the hall of the Department of Education was free.

According to Yurii Shkalikov, such seminars are very useful. Soldiers and their relatives feel that there are people who do not just talk, but really help.

A DROP IN THE OCEAN

Within the program “Promotion of social adaptation of the ATO participants and their families by providing psychological and legal aid”, which is implemented with the support of International Renaissance Foundation, 10 visits of mobile groups to the region are planned. Most of the districts have been already covered. Every visit is attended by about 30 people. It is a drop in the ocean. After all, there are about 5,000 demobilized soldiers. And if one counts their wives and parents, the total number is up to 20,000.

Legal aid is available through the hotline “Legal Space” Mon thru Fri from 10 am-6 pm: 093-14-77-303, 099-46-83-848. A lawyer receives clients in his office on Mondays from 10 am-3 pm, address: 2 Frunze St., of. 6, Kherson.

A visitor of Legal Space can ask a lawyer and receive a response within 24 hours: <http://legalspace.org/index.php/ua/helper/onlineconsl> or consult lawyers of Law Community Center Network in the chat room. Visiting hours: Mon thru Fri from 10 am-4 pm.

The Law Community Center Network provides free primary legal aid. It consists of 25 NGOs in 17 regions of Ukraine.

Father Andrii can be contacted weekdays at: 3 Perekopska St., Kherson; telephone: 050-418-10-01.

6.

How an ATO veteran and a human rights activist prevailed over Kharkiv City Council



Chuhuiv,
Kharkiv region



Legal aid to the
ATO participants
and their families

Kharkiv City Council lost the case against the officer – the ATO participant supported by lawyers of Chuhuiv human rights group. The court obliged the municipality to provide the ATO participant who is a non-resident of Kharkiv region with a land plot.

Viktor* is a Ukrainian soldier who lived in Feodosia and had to leave the peninsula when Crimea was annexed by Russia. The officer was not tempted by the promise of high wage in the “Russian world”, moreover, he went to fight with the armed invaders and their henchmen.

Having entered the military service at Kharkiv Academy of the National Guard of Ukraine, Victor was registered as an internally displaced person.

In May last year he received the status of the ATO combatant. After that, he requested the Mayor of Kharkiv to consider including him in the city-wide list of persons eligible to receive a land plot.

However, on June 26, 2015, Kharkiv City Council refused a land plot to Viktor, claiming that he is not a registered resident of the city of Kharkiv. Given the fact that the law has no reference to the place of registration or residence of the serviceman on a specific territory in terms of land allocation, Victor addressed human rights defenders.

Lawyers of Chuhuiv human rights group headed by **Roman Lykhachov** prepared the statement of claim and defended the interests of the plaintiff in the court.



HEAD OF CHUHUIV HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, LAWYER **ROMAN LYKHACHOV**.

On the international Human Rights Day, December 10, 2015, Dzerzhynskyi district court of Kharkiv acknowledged the actions of the Kharkiv City Council on the refusal of land plot illegal and obliged it to include Viktor in the city-wide list of persons eligible to receive a land plot “pursuant to current legislation of Ukraine governing the allocation of land to the ATO participants”, according to statement of 14.05.2015.

Officials of the City Council disagreed with “the current legislation of Ukraine” and the decision of the court and decided to appeal.

Recently, Kharkiv Regional Administrative Court of Appeals decided to uphold the decision of Dzerzhynskyi district court of Kharkiv of 10.12.2015. It was noted: “The Board of Judges does not accept the mandatory registration in the city of Kharkiv provided by the Procedure for registration of citizens wishing to obtain the land plots for construction and maintenance of commercial buildings and structures approved by decision of Kharkiv City Council of 20.02.2009, as the law adopted by the supreme authority does not contain such a restriction”.

“This is a precedent, we will disseminate information about the developments in terms of defending the rights of the ATO combatants against the arbitrariness of the authorities”, members of ChHRG stated.

** The person's name is changed for ethical reasons.*

7.

Human rights activists helped an IDP miner to “unfreeze” his pension



Chuhuiv,
Kharkiv Region



Legal aid to
the internally
displaced persons

Lawyers of Chuhuiv human rights group helped an IDP miner to get his pension paid.

Serhii* worked at the mine for almost all his life. He hoped that when he retired, he would get a decent pension. But the hostilities in Donbas forced him to move to Kharkiv oblast.

After having settled in Chuhuiv district, in September 2015 the displaced person filed a request for a miner’s pension to the office of the Pension Fund along with a certificate from the mine located in Luhansk region that confirmed the miner’s actual work experience.

The staff of the Pension Fund had no claims to the papers provided. However, for some reasons Serhii failed to receive a pension during the last 7 months. The officials never provided any clear answer to numerous questions about the reasons for the delay in processing the pension.

An IDP miner asked the lawyers of the Station Chuhuiv volunteer initiative for help. Lawyers of Chuhuiv human rights group prepared and filed a complaint via the Government hotline against the employees of the Pension Fund regarding their inactivity.

After that, the case moved and a retired miner was finally granted the pension.



HEAD OF CHUHUIV HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, LAWYER **ROMAN LYKHACHOV**.

Free legal aid was provided within the project “Station Chuhviv – a consulting and information center for IDPs” supported by the Program Initiative “Public initiative of New Ukraine” of **International Renaissance Foundation**.

** The person’s name is changed for ethical reasons.*

Emergency volunteer assistance: a critically ill IDP received free medical care



Chuhuiv,
Kharkiv Region

One day, a deaf and dumb displaced person addressed the Center of IDP support and consultations “Station Chuhuiv” at **Chuhuiv human rights group**. The man needed urgent medical assistance due to the extremely serious disease: palate cancer with metastatic disease and open festering ulcer of lymphocytosis on the neck. The case was really urgent as each hour mattered.



Legal aid to
the internally
displaced persons

There were people who very quickly responded to a problematic situation. The volunteer of ChHRG, member of Chuhuiv District Council **Margaryta Lykhachova**, bypassing all bureaucratic procedures, did not hesitate to deal directly with the chief physician of Chuhuiv central district hospital Viacheslav Grushko with a request for help. And she received full support.

Thanks to **Viacheslav Grushko**, Kharkiv Regional Oncology Center appointed treatment to an IDP and an oncologist of Chuhuiv central district hospital **Yuri Shypenko** wrote out free prescription to buy medicines for chemotherapy.

After the prescription was transferred to Chuhuiv Central District Pharmacy No. 62 (headed by **Liliia Borodai**), the drugs were immediately ordered and the next morning delivered to the destination.



LAWYER OF CHUHUIV HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP **MARGARITA LYKHACHOVA**.

On February 16, the “Station Chuhviv” Kharkiv Regional Charitable Foundation “Social Service of Assistance” gave out food baskets. A total of 40 persons received humanitarian aid and a critically ill IDP was the first to obtain it from the hands of the representative of the Foundation **Valerii Zadorenko**. The man was immediately brought to Kharkiv for hospital admission.

9.

When seniors are considered “useless”, community activists come to rescue



Uzhhorod,
Zakarpattia
region



Empowerment
of Roma
communities

Two seniors, two sad stories and two identical conclusions: “We are useless”. Free legal aid provided to residents of the Roma settlement of Radvanka in Uzhhorod allowed one old man to receive medical treatment and heat the house, and the other one – to receive a subsidy.

HEALTH GOT WORSE AND PENSION IS MISERABLE

Ishtvan Yoshtvan is 74. His family is socially unprotected. In other words, the pensioner and his disabled wife can hardly make both ends meet. Therefore, the surgery the old man recently received considerably “undermined” the scarce budget.

Ishtvan could hardly collect about UAH 2,000 for the surgery and had no money for further treatment.

They addressed **Law Community Center at NGO “Roma”**. The lawyer **Serhii Chichak** found out that since 1978 the man had worked in Uzhgorod Road Maintenance Department and performed the harmful work in sewer treatment. As a result, he earned scanty pension and the whole bunch of chronic diseases the treatment of which require significant funds.

“We addressed the enterprise for the reference”, Serhiy Chichak explained, “If the information is true, he will be able to receive an extra pension”.



ISHTVAN YOSHTVAN AND HIS SPOUSE.

In addition, the lawyer sent an inquiry to the Head of the Department of labor and social protection of Uzhhorod City Council for providing feasible financial support to Ishtvan Yoshtvan. Thus, Ishtvan was granted UAH 2,500 to complete the treatment. Besides, the pensioner received 2 cubic meters of firewood.



LAWYER **SERHIY CHICHAK** (*on the right*) VISITED HUSTAV MAKULA AND HELPED HIM TO PROCESS DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR RECEIVING A SUBSIDY.

SORE FEET, SCANTY INCOME, HIGH TARIFFS...

Hustav Makula's story is not less sad. The 73-year old Roma can hardly even get up. He couldn't come to LCC office, so he asked his family member to do it. The lawyer visited the pensioner and helped him to file the application for a subsidy and to fill in the income declaration. Documents were sent to the Department of labor and social protection of Uzhhorod City Council.

10.

Legal awareness raising program. An employer was reminded of the rights of a sick child's mother



Novoaidar,
Luhansk region



Labor law

An employer did not consider the need to improve the HIV-positive child's health as a sufficient reason for granting summer annual leave to his mother. He offered her to go to the sea... in October. A mother preferred legal means to resolve the conflict.

Resident of Novoaidar in Luhansk region Maria* could have a rest with her son at the sea only in August – according to the social sanatorium voucher. No other time was acceptable. The HIV-positive minor boy's mother was so much delighted with an opportunity to improve her child's health that she bought the train tickets in advance.

However, the director her company strongly refused to grant the leave in August, claiming that everyone wants to have a rest in the summer, so there is no one to work. Therefore, the woman could hardly expect the leave earlier than in October, according to the approved schedule.

Maria addressed **Novoaidar Community Law Center at NGO "Public Service of Legal Aid"**. Lawyer of the Center Anastasia Pavlova explained that the mother had the right to annual additional leave in the amount of 10 calendar days in summer or at any other convenient to her.

“We also helped to draw up a statement to the director the enterprise, in which we referred to Article 18 of the Law of Ukraine “On Countering the Spread of Diseases Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Legal and Social Protection of People Living with HIV”**. Moreover, we called the administration of the enterprise and explained the claimant’s rights”, the lawyer told.

Legal awareness raising helped: a couple of days later Maria called the Center and thanked for the professional and efficient help: she and her son were allowed to have a rest at the sea during a summer time.

** Name of person featured in publication is changed for ethical reasons.*

*** Reference*

The Law of Ukraine “On Countering the Spread of Diseases Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Legal and Social Protection of People Living with HIV”.

Article 18. The rights of parents of HIV-positive children and children with HIV/AIDS-caused diseases.

1. Parents of HIV-positive children and children with HIV/AIDS-caused diseases and persons who perform their functions have the right to:
 - 1) Jointly stay in hospital in-patient facilities with children under 14 years and receive the child care paid leave;
 - 2) Receive additional annual leave in the amount of 10 days in summer or another time convenient to them, before children are 18.

11.

How insensible officials provoke mistrust towards authorities



Kakhovka,
Kherson region



Legal aid to the
ATO participants
and their families

Yosyp Matkovskyi was mobilized in September, 2014. He spent several months in the ATO zone near Mariinka. At the end of December, he got a heart attack. He received a 3-months treatment and rehabilitation. Yosyp was granted a status of service-disabled veteran only on November 2, 2015, as officials hesitated to make the relevant decision.

Yosyp Matkovskyi is 57 years old. He is the Chernobyl veteran. In September, 2014, he was mobilized to the army. He was at war on the frontline near Marynka. Suffering severe war conditions, he started feeling pain behind his breast. On December 29, Yosyp felt very bad and was delivered to hospital with an acute heart attack.

He received treatment till March 2015. Then he underwent military-medical commission that recognized him as unfit for further military service. On September 16, the medical and social expert commission (MSEC) issued the disability certificate due to the disease related to “the defense of the Fatherland”.

Next day, on September 17, Yosyp requested the Department of labor and social protection of Kakhovka City Council to grant him a status of service-disabled veteran. Only in one month, on October 15, he received the letter from the Department saying that they couldn't make the decision on his request independently. Therefore, he addressed the Department of social protection of Kherson Regional Administration for explanations, which in turn contacted the Ministry of



YOSYP MATKOVSKIY (on the right) WITH HIS FRIEND DURING A RECEPTION IN KHERSON OFFICE OF LEGAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK.

Social Policy. They decision will be made after the clarifications are provided by the Ministry, the officials said.

This problem supposedly appeared because of the difference in the wordings that explain the reasons of disability. The MSEC statements reads: “The disease related to the defense of the Fatherland”, while the Law of Ukraine “On the Status of War Veterans and Guarantees of Their Social Protection” provides for granting the status of service-disabled veteran to the military personnel who became disabled due to “the disease suffered during the defense of the Fatherland”.

The man addressed a lawyer of **Community Law Center of Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation Volodymyr Orlovskiy**. Having examined the case, he decided to visit the reception office of the Head of the Department of social protection of Kherson Regional Administration Hennadyi Prychyna. The official promised to speed up the process.

On November 2, Yosyp was granted a certificate of service-disabled veteran.



Comment by Volodymyr Orlovskiy::

To avoid or minimize the red tape while applying for service-disabled status you should know some rules.

*First, you can learn the procedure of providing the disabled veteran status by asking for free legal consultation in **Community Law Center Network** and in reception offices of **Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union**.*

Second, if you were illegally refused the disabled veteran status, you may appeal it to the court. Thus, it is necessary to keep copies of statements and correspondence with government bodies.

Third, when addressing government bodies, you should only submit documents requested by the law. For example, to receive a certificate of service-disabled veteran, you should provide a certificate of disability level and cause issued by the MSEC.

The mobilized soldiers 'fight' with the employers in the courts



Kherson

The law guarantees preservation of average wage for all the period of military service and establishes responsibility for those employers that violate it. Effectiveness of the law directly depends on how determined soldiers are to assert their rights. The Legal Space team helps with it. The lawyer of Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation **Volodymyr Orlovskyi** told the journalist of Deutsche Welle **Galyna Stadnik** about the experience of protecting the rights of the mobilized citizens.



Legal aid to the
ATO participants
and their families

A FIGHT TILL THE VICTORY

The resident of Lviv Mykola Malanych served in the ATO zone for 14 months. The man went to Luhansk region with the first wave of mobilization in August, 2014, together with his brothers. In Lviv, the man left the wife and three daughters, and the position of the first Deputy Head of the State Inspection of Agriculture in Lviv region. "As soon as they learned that I was going to defend the country in eastern regions, I was fired. Without preservation of a salary and a position. Consider the fact that I personally reported my mobilization to the management", Mykola Malanych told in the interview with DW.

Half a year of judicial proceedings and high level of publicity in mass media was necessary to renew justice. However, according to the interlocutor, the case has not been completed yet, it is to be considered in the Supreme Administrative Court. Although the court of the first instance completely satisfied the claim of the mobilized soldier and obliged the

State Inspection of Agriculture to pay the owed wage and reinstate him in a position, the court of appeals abolished this decision.

However, the demobilized soldier is determined to win the case: *“I have appealed against the decision in the highest authorities; I will prove the society and the state that the ATO combatants have the right to preservation of their jobs. I won't return back because I consider them traitors”*, Malanych noted.

Although there is no final decision in the case yet, the management already paid Mykola the owed salary.

DON'T SIGN A RESIGNATION

“Cases of violations of the right of mobilized persons to work are quite numerous”, Volodymyr Orlovskyi commented, “I have been engaged in supporting three similar cases, besides, I provide a lot of consultations on the issue by phone. My clients are both the ATO participants and employers”.

The lawyer noted that the mobilized person can only expect receiving an official salary, it does not deal with 'envelope' wages which is a rather widespread practice in Ukraine. Finally, it is almost impossible to prove in the court that you were forced to sign a resignation after the employer promised to reinstate you after the end of the military service.

FIRING IS UNPROFITABLE

Before they violate the law and fire the mobilized citizens, Volodymyr Orlovsky advises employers to count expenses well. *“It is not favorable at all. The employer has to face a considerable penalty, s/he also must pay wages the state will never compensate, moral harm and the severance pay which will never be returned, too”*, Orlovsky explained. *“All of this is possible, of course, if a employee persistently asserting his or her rights. Usually, the mobilized persons have nothing to lose, and they actively file claims”*, the lawyer added, *“If the employer is responsible and regularly pays salary to the mobilized person, he has the right to expect on the state compensation”*.

VIOLATION COMES FROM IGNORANCE?

According to the lawyer, the employer's legal unawareness is the main reason for violations of the labor law. *“A provision that sets forth the preservation of job and average wage has been modified and supplemented five times since spring last year”*, Orlovskyi explained, *“Also, you should consider legal collisions that unfair employers could use to fire soldiers”*.



LAWYER OF IRC "LEGAL SPACE" VOLODYMYR ORLOVSKYI.

The lawyer believes that until the inconsistency of legislative modifications is fixed and adequate clarifications are provided to the employers, new violations would take place. However, if the employer does it deliberately, not reacting to the complaint, the only option that remains is to file a claim with the court and the State Labor Inspection.

Source: Deutsche Welle

13.

A retiree defended her right to land



Kamianets-Podilskyi, Khmelnytskyi region



Property rights

A disabled pensioner from Kamianets-Podilskyi proved her right to land in court.

In 2005, Anna* came into ownership of the land plot for agricultural commodity production pursuant to the decision of Rykhtivsky Village Council. A woman received a state certificate of the property title. However, she found out later that she was not the only owner of this land.

It appeared that there were two state certificates of the ownership over one and same land plot. The first was received by Anna, the second one was granted to another person the next year.

Thus, there were two legal documents certifying the right of ownership over the same land plot of 1.86 hectares.

Getting frustrated, Anna addressed ***Kamianets-Podilskyi Law Community Center***.

The senior associate of the Center **Tetiana Vasylieva** helped a woman solve the issue. She prepared and filed with the court a claim for recognition of the state certificate of the property title, while the subsequent decision of Kamyanets-Podilskyi District State Administration was declared invalid.

Now the claim is satisfied by the court in full.

**The name is changed for ethical reasons*

14.

Inheritance is saved. Mom's will is honored



Kamianets-Podilskyi,
Khmelnyskyi
region

A resident of Mezhyrich village, Sumy region, who could not accept inheritance after his mother's death, contacted Kamianets-Podilskyi office of the Legal Development Network at the local Lawyers Association. His 86-year-old mother died in May, 2015, and the year before it Oleksandr went to work abroad. Relationship with his mother was periodically interrupted. After returning home, Oleksandr learned that his deceased mother left him the will. The man appealed to the notary, but he refused to issue the certificate of inheritance, as it was over 6 months since the death of the testator. The notary advised to apply to the court to set the extended period for acceptance of inheritance.



Property rights

The Head of the Kamianets-Podilskyi office **Viktoriya Ilchyshena** helped to make a claim. The court established the extended deadline for filing a notary public statement of acceptance of inheritance. On September 16, 2016, Oleksandr sent to the First Kamianets-Podilskyi state notary's office the proper application for acceptance of inheritance.



LAWYER OF KAMIANETS-PODILSKYI LAWYERS ASSOCIATION **VIKTORIA ILCHYSHENA**.

15.

Reparation of moral damages for illegal action of police and prosecutors



Chuhuiv,
Kharkiv region

Within the framework of the criminal investigation, the law enforcement held the suspects on restricted residence for six years. The case was closed due to the “absence of corpus delicti”. However, nobody bothered to communicate this joyful news to the suspects who were under the risk of incarceration for years. Only two years later, they got the response from Kharkiv Prosecutor’s Office that the case against them was closed.



Access to justice

So, it turned out that innocent people were limited of their freedom of movement – in fact, for over eight years. Victims addressed Chuhuiv Network Office. The Head of the Chuhuiv human rights group Roman Lykhachov prepared the claim to the court. Three residents of the village of Shevchenkove, Kharkiv region, received a total of UAH 93,800 to compensate their moral damage for the illegal actions of the police and prosecutors.

This decision proves that you can seek reparation of damages caused by the unlawful decisions, actions or omission of law enforcement agencies even through the national law in the court, as guaranteed by article 56 of the Constitution of Ukraine. The funds have been recovered.



THE HEAD OF THE CHUHUIV HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, LAWYER **ROMAN LYKHACHOV** (*in the center*) TOGETHER WITH HIS CLIENTS.

16.

Dvorichna Law Community Center saved IDPs from bureaucratic confusion



Dvorichna,
Kharkiv region

The issue whether an IDP certificate without a stamp is valid was not legally settled for almost five months. Due to the agency of the representatives of Dvorichna community, Kharkiv region, volunteers and staff of **Dvorichna Law Community Center**, the problem was resolved at the level of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The campaign started with the appeal of the Head of Olshanskyi Village Council to the LCC.



Legal aid to
the internally
displaced persons

In January 2016, changes were made to the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons”. According to them, the stamp on the certificate of IDP proving the residence registration was not a compulsory requirement any more. However, in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers # 509 “On the Record of the Internally Displaced Persons” of 01 October 2014, this standard remained unchanged. Until April 2016, the territorial departments of the State Migration Service (SMS) were making such stamps, because the certificates were considered invalid without them.

However, since April 2016, the power to register the residence was handed over to the local authorities.

*“Since then, the IDPs have become hostage to the bureaucracy of officials”, says the LCC lawyer **Vitalii Babyka**. “On one hand, the SMS has no opportunity to register the place of residence as*



LAWYER OF THE NGO “DVORICHNA RURAL COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION” **VITALII BABYKA**.

it's beyond their scope of competence. On the other hand, local governments cannot affix the place of registration in the certificate, because Regulation # 509 clearly states that it is a job of the territorial division of the SMS. The law does not contain such requirements”.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF BUREAUCRACY

The LCC representatives initiated consideration of this issue at the monthly meetings of representatives of the district authorities. During the discussions, it turned out that residents of Vilshanka were not the only ones who faced this problem. There were six such cases in the district at that time.

It resulted in a joint decision to contact the Ministry of Social Policy about bringing Resolution # 509 in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons”.

The preparation of the request was entrusted with the LCC lawyer Vitalii Babyka. After the detailed study, a lawyer prepared a letter reflective of the opinions of all the stakeholders that was signed by the Head of Dvorichna Rural Communities Foundation Liudmyla Kovtun and submitted to the Minister for Social Policy of Ukraine.

The LCC has already received the response that Cabinet had supported this request. On 8 June 2016, the Government cancelled the provision on the mandatory affixing of the registration of IDPs in the IDP certificates. Such a certificate shall have no expiration date, except as provided in article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons”.

Now the IDPs will be able to avoid annoying bureaucratic red tape with the stamps.

17.

A settlement agreement saved funds of a Village Council



Dvorichna,
Kharkiv region



Expert and
legal support to
communities

A lawyer helped the Village Council to save about UAH 20,000 for its community through the negotiations with service provider.

In 2014, a contract for repair of roads in the village was awarded by Kolodiazhne Village Council, Dvorichna district, to a contractor. A total of UAH 20,000 was planned to spend at the expense of subventions from the state budget. However, the funds were not transferred to the account of the Village Council. In December 2015, the contractor filed a claim with the Economic Court of Kharkiv Region requesting to recover the debt and the penalties totaling to UAH 38,000.

The village head appealed to the financial department of the District Administration. The Village Council engaged the lawyer of the Dvorichna Network Office **Vitalii Babyka** to provide legal support.

Given the legitimacy of claims of the contractor, the lawyer suggested to resolve the issue through negotiations with the plaintiff in order to negotiate to reduce the penalty.

During the negotiations, the representatives of Village Council explained that they failed to pay for the services, as they had not received subventions from the state budget. Such expenditures are made solely from the special fund, where there was not enough money. Moreover, there is no procedure for transferring funds from the general fund to the special fund.



The arguments persuaded the plaintiff who agreed to abandon a part of the claim. The Center's lawyer Vitalii Babyka prepared a settlement agreement that was supported at the hearing and approved by the Economic Court.

The Village Council repaid fully the contractor. Due to the legal aid and the integrity of the plaintiff, it managed to save some UAH 20,000 of the community funds.

In the follow-up, Dvorichna Office of the Legal Development Network plans to provide training to heads of Village Councils of the district on negotiation skills and conflict management.

18.

Domestic violence. How to get out of the tyranny



Khmelnytskyi



Assistance
to victims of
domestic violence

It's a disaster when a mother with three children is forced to endure daily humiliation and suffer from an alleged head of the family. The reason is that they have no place to go or where to stay. The husband threatens to throw them out. Violence in many families can be stopped if there is another shelter for women with children. However, when this is impossible, victims of domestic violence become hostages of the "housing issue". This story happened to a resident of Khmelnytskyi Olha and her three children.

She told in tears her dreadful story about her husband, a tyrant who drinks and then hits her and their children. Then he felt the power and resorted to shameful blackmail.

The family lives in the non-privatized apartment. According to the law, all members of the family are entitled to their shares. But the head of the family decided that entire apartment belonged to him. He began to bother the life out of his wife and three children. He constantly staged drunken showdown, spoiled housing, did everything possible to make the woman grab the children and leave the house desperately. God knows how the family endured this captivity. But when the father began to slap their own children, Olha couldn't stand any longer. Pavlo required that everyone left and withdrew from registration. Only then, he will stop bullying them.

The woman decided to ask the lawyers of the Legal Development Network Office at Podil Legal League about her and her husband's rights. The lawyer explained that the woman and her children have the property rights to the most of the apart-



LAWYER OF PODIL LEGAL LEAGUE **KRYSZYNA ANTONIUK**.

ment. He also promised to defend the rights of family in the court. Lawyers prepared a claim for the eviction of her husband. However, it wasn't easy to evict him, because he filed a counterclaim calling to evict his wife and children to privatize the apartment just for himself.

The trial lasted from November 2013 to April 2014. A settlement agreement was reached that satisfied everyone. The plaintiffs agreed to take their claims back, and the husband gave consent that all five family members should privatize the apartment. Olha and her children felt more confident. At least, they have a place to live.

As for her husband's behavior, Olha decided that if Pavlo did not change and continued the same violent action, she would engage the police and lawyers.

19.

The ECtHR issued judgment in favor of Chernobyl veterans from Kovel



Kovel,
Volyn region



Access to justice

Four Chernobyl veterans from Kovel received the decision of the European Court of Human Rights according to which the state of Ukraine is obliged to pay them supplementary pensions, and also EUR 1,000 as compensation for moral harm. This is one of strategic litigation cases that were run by lawyers of **Kovel Law Community Center** for four years.

In 2012-2013, disabled Chernobyl veterans applied to Volyn regional NGO “Center of Legal Aid” in the city of Kovel. They couldn’t enjoy the exercise of the court decision on supplementary pensions to them.

Although the Chernobyl veterans won the trial, court orders remained unexecuted due to the lack of money for that in the State Budget of Ukraine.

The legal adviser of the Center **Natalia Dubrova** filed the claim with the European Court of Human Rights against the state of Ukraine about collecting money on judgments and compensation of moral harm in the amount of EUR 10,000.

Within next two years, three of eight Chernobyl veterans received letters from Strasbourg on progress of their cases.

In 2014, the amount was fully paid to them. As for the other Chernobyl veterans, at the end of 2014 it turned out that consideration was postponed as the Government of Ukraine had promised to implement the decision of national courts voluntarily.



LAWYER OF VOLYN OBLAST NGO "CENTER OF LEGAL AID" **NATALIA DUBROVA.**

In June of 2015, residents of Kovel received written notices that the European Court of Human Rights resumed consideration of their cases, because the Ukrainian Government failed to voluntarily implement their commitments. Three more complainants were expecting a fair court decision. However, the estimate of moral harm decreased to EUR 1,000. So, the case started moving slowly again.

At the end of 2015, four more Chernobyl veterans shared the news about the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights to collect from the state of Ukraine the money awarded by Kovel city court as supplementary pensions and pay them EUR 1,000 as a compensation for moral harm.

20.

Re-imbusement of a lost cow through a common law in the Ukrainian court



Kovel,
Volyn region



Property rights

In October 2013, a confused elderly woman came to Kovel Network Office. At that time, she contacted everybody, but nobody helped her. She lost her favorite cow in the pasture. This is a big loss for the large family. A shepherd who was responsible for the herd – it was her neighbor – did not recognize his guilt and disagreed to compensate the loss. He even stopped to greet her on the street. Larysa addressed the police only to receive a refusal from the Department of internal Affairs to open criminal proceedings against the shepherd. She was recommended to go to the court to get remedy of the property damage.

The lawyer of Volyn Center of Legal Aid **Natalia Dubrova** prepared a claim against the shepherd requesting him to reimburse UAH 7,000 or to give his cow in return of the deceased one. The shepherd refused to pay the money for the dead cow. They had nothing to do by sue him in the court to get compensation for the property damage and loss of profits in the form of the unsold milk, as well as for the trial costs. The total amount of the damage estimate exceeded UAH 8,000.

During the first hearing in the court, the experience of the judge helped them to settle a compensation. The shepherd agreed to the judge's proposal and promised to but new cow until December 17, 2013. The final court hearing was



appointed on the same date. But the defendant did not keep his promise. The neighbors sued each other for a long time until the Executive Service intervened. And finally, the shepherd compensated the damages after the appeal. It is sad that a lot of time and emotions were lost. However, there is a hope that all participants gained invaluable experience. And this won't happen any after.

The uniqueness of this case lies in the unusual approach of the lawyer who managed to prove in court the force of the customary law.

21.

A stolen horse was returned to a senior... by lawyers



Kovel,
Volyn region



Property rights

It is for the second time when the lawyers of Volyn Center of Legal Aid help a senior to get back her horse. Four years ago Maria's son while being drunk took his mother's horse along with the cart to his village.

The old woman tried to peacefully return the animal, because it is an internal family case. But the son ignored all her pleas. The woman was seriously worrying that her son could just drink away the horse and two families would be left without help on the farm. She appealed to the district inspector. But he advised her to contact the public lawyers of Kovel Network Legal Development Office.

So the senior got to Natalia Dubrova, who made a written claim to the police requesting to open criminal proceedings against Maria's son and sent a complain to the district Prosecutor's Office to appeal the omission of the district inspector. Two days later, the son returned the animal along with the cart.

Four years passed. Suddenly, in March, Maria visited the lawyer with the same problem. Now, however, her granddaughter's partner took the horse. On February 28, 2016, a young man kidnapped the horse and took it to his family. The woman was shocked by such a brazen act. Her requests to return her property were in vain. She got just insults and threats. Lawyer **Natalia Dubrova** prepared a statement to Kovel National Police to prosecute a young person under article 185 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine for stealing the horse. Then, the policeman came to the perpetrators for the



preventive conversation. But the first time, it didn't help. The lawyer had to file the second complaint to the police.

A few days later Maria gratefully and happily reported that the horse was returned to her.

22.

Legal status in Ukraine is a chance for decent life of Moldovan migrants



Odesa



Migration.
Legal aid to
the internally
displaced persons

The story of this family can be illustrative to other persons who lost their citizenship after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and encourage them to register their legal status in Ukraine that gives a chance for a decent life.

Tatiana Muntian is now as young as 27 years old, she makes plans for the future, caring for children, working on the farm. The official status of a stateless person and registration of birth certificates for her six children saved the family of a migrant from Moldova from poverty and injustice, gave all its members hope for the future. Tatiana received a status of the large family and child allowance. After the first payment, the family purchased a house in the village. Children legally went to school and kindergarten. The eldest children for the first time in their life went to the health camp. They will be able to obtain the documents on secondary education, continue education, to work legally, to create a family, to participate in the political life of the country and otherwise fully fulfil themselves.

The Muntian family with five children moved to Ukraine in 1996 from a small village through involuntary unemployment of parents who had been fired from the factory. First, the family moved to a village in Odesa region where the mother's sister lived. The parents found a job at a local farm. During migration, Tatiana Muntian was 9 years old, she had just finished the third grade. After moving to Ukraine, she never went to school – “my mother did not allow”. From that

moment, the girl found out that her statelessness significantly limited her rights. Tatiana had only the birth certificate been issued in the Moldavian SSR's. However, there was the opportunity to apply for Ukrainian citizenship at that time, but it cost UAH 600 per child. The mother refused to pay.

Subsequently, the large family moved to Krasnooknianskyi district of Odesa region. Here Tatiana got married twice. Now the refugee has six children – from 11 years to 1 year old. All children were born in the village of Fedorivka. Two of the youngest are children of the current partner, the other four are of the previous partner. All the children are not registered, have only birth certificates from the medical institution. The school understood the situation and enrolled the children, however, demanded to register the status and required documents before graduation. Otherwise, children will not receive graduation certificates.

For many years, Tatiana tried to arrange their status in Ukraine. She addressed the passport office (immigration) in the center district and in the city of Odesa, the Consulate of the Republic of Moldova in Odesa. She even got a UAH 500 certificate of absence of citizenship of Moldova, paid for an official translation of metrics, collected documents. The issue was complicated by a mistake in the name on the birth certificate, where she was recorded as Muntianu, and all the rest of the family – as Muntian. While the documents were being gathered, legal requirements varied. Then she had to start again. Unsuccessful attempts to legalize the status in Ukraine lasted for four years on the background of significant poverty, starting in 2008. The Registrar also refused to make children's "metrics" without a residence permit in Ukraine. Despite all the obstacles, Tatiana wanted to live in Ukraine.

In 2012, the powerlessness of their children prompted Tatiana to seek assistance of the lawyers of Odesa NGO "Committee of Voters of Ukraine". The issue involved experts of Kotovskyi Department of Justice and Stavrivskyi village head Anatolii Gupalo. The lawyers provided free legal support to this case, drafted the necessary documents, appealed to the authorities to speed up the process. Director of local factory Anatolii Moskalev where Tatiana's husband was employed allocated money for issuing a residence permit in Ukraine, translation of documents, paying the fees in the amount of UAH 22,000 at the expense of his upcoming salary.



Finally, on November 5, 2012, Tatiana and her two sisters received the status of stateless persons, registered their long-awaited indefinite residence permits in Ukraine, and later they also got the identification codes. Tatiana had to go to the Prosecutor Office for children's paperwork. In spring of 2013, all her six children received the certificates and Ukrainian citizenship. And their mother first received child allowance.

23.

Judges' human rights 'blow off game' with a senior



Ivano-Frankivsk



Access to justice

In early 2016, a resident of Kalush district Bohdan Maruniak appealed to the Kalush city district court of Ivano-Frankivsk region with a special claim. However, the judge I.Sukharnyk refused him in access to justice on flimsy grounds.

However, Bohdan insisted and decided to fight on. In June, he again filed a claim with the same content. But this time a different judge V.Onushkanych decided not to open a proceeding in the case.

The lawyer contacted Maruniak saying that the reason for the refusal was an incorrectly prepared claim therefore, he recommended to change it rather than file an appeal.

Bohdan Maruniak contacted Ivano-Frankivsk Network Office at Stanislav Human Rights Group where the lawyer Yaroslav Vasiutin helped him to make an appeal. On 21 July 2016, the Court of Appeals abolished the illegal decision of the court of the first instance and the case was sent for further consideration on the merits.

The disabled person could achieve access to justice with the help of Stanislav Human Rights Group.



THE HEAD OF STANISLAV HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP **ANDRII MALETIN**.

24.

Officers came after an ambulance



Kherson



Legal aid to the ATO participants and their families

In October last year, the Legal Space web portal published the news of the egregious event about how the command of the military unit tried to kidnap a soldier (a resident of Kherson) who was struck by electricity from an ambulance “to hush up” the accident.

The soldier’s mother Natalia Repina told **Volodymyr Orlovskyy**, the lawyer of **Community Law Center** of Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation, that her son Mykyta was always eager to become a military. So he went to a military registration and enlistment office. He was sent to the A-0981 military unit in the village of Lisove of Oleksandrivsky district in Kirovohrad region. On October 19, the commanding officer ordered Mykyta to dig a trench. He had to work with a scrap – the dried-up earth appeared firmer than granite. When he once again struck on the stony soil, sparks flew, his palms smoked and the guy fainted. It appeared that he was ordered to dig the place where there was a 380 Volt cable.

Due to the negligence of the commander of the military unit, the man did not receive urgent medical care. When he got to the emergency department, commanders of the unit demanded from physicians to discharge him from hospital*.

The lawyer of the Center Volodymyr Orlovskyy specified the circumstances and confirmed the facts Mykyta’s mother had shared. However, the investigation has not started so far, despite the legal requirement that it has to start within 24 hours after the crime was reported.



While the lawyer continued to advise Natalia Repina, the doctor called her to tell that the commanders of the unit arrived again and demanded to give Mykyta back to them. They were refused and the guy was brought by the ambulance to Vinnytsia hospital. The officers pursued the ambulance from Oleksandria to Kirovohrad and pushed the vehicle to the kurb demanding to stop. This was reported by an anesthesiologist who cared of the patient.

Volodymyr Orlovskiy helped the mother to draft a report of the crime and submit it to the police. In order to accelerate investigation, the director of **IRC "Legal Space" Natalia Bimbiraite** reported this case to the commander of Internal Military Service who promised to control the course of investigation.

On October 30, the mother reported that an officer from Internal Military Service came to her son and later the commander attended the hospital to collect written statement. In November, investigation was completed, conclusions were transferred to the military prosecutor's office of Kirovohrad military unit for starting a criminal proceeding.

Mykyta Repin obtained treatment and is now serving in another division of the military unit. No complaint so far.

** For more details, read here:*
<http://legalspace.org/en/video/item/5770-ofitsery-peresliduvaly-shvydku>

25.

When the government unlawfully refused your right... Where to seek help



Kherson

In August 2015, the lawyer of the **IRC “Legal space” Volodymyr Orlovskyy** received a request from the coordinator of Ukrainian Bar Association Yaryna Dupai:

“We received a request for legal aid from a wife of the deceased soldier about obtaining the ATO combatant status, as well as compensation to family members. The wife lives in Kramatorsk. There are no lawyers of the Association there. Can you help or advise where to go?”



Legal aid to the ATO participants and their families

The soldier of the National Guard Vasyl Bilyi died on August 29, 2014, in Ilovaisk. His wife Olena is living in Kramatorsk. At the time of asking for help, she was unable to receive the status of a family member of the deceased soldier for one year.

The local department of social protection admitted that Vasyl Bilyi defended the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and his wife was unlawfully refused the status of a member of victim’s family, describing the man’s death like that: “Vasyl Bilyi’s death caused by gunshot wounds happened when he served in the military and was directly involved in the protection of public order, public security, and the fight against crime”.

After ineffective appeals to the government agencies, Olena



was hoping for the help of NGOs. The lawyer of Kherson Legal Development Network office Volodymyr Orlovskiy made a complaint against the action of the Department of social protection and explained Olena a procedure of its submission to the authorized state bodies. But a misunderstanding occurred again. In October 2015, Olena repeatedly asked for help – now the Department of social protection of Kramatorsk City Council actually upheld the complaint, but it demanded a proof of direct participation of her husband in the ATO to issue her a certificate of a member of the victim's family. Volodymyr Orlovskiy held a telephone conversation with the staff of the Department of social protection.

Despite the inconsistency of such a requirement to the law and given the duration of the dispute in the trial, the lawyer still advised Olena to take such a proof in the military unit in order to remove the obstacles and accelerate the process.

Finally, on 14 November, Olena said that she had received a certificate and sent a letter of gratitude: "Dear Volodymyr! I want to express my gratitude for the help in obtaining the status of a member of the family of the deceased soldier. I made a lot of unsuccessful attempts, visited a lot of lawyers, but you did not refuse and helped me to solve my problem. I wish you success in your hard work. Sincerely, Olena Bila".

26.

The Radvanka Roma can restore their right to housing



Uzhhorod



Property rights

The title of owners of multi-apartment building in the village of Radvanka will be protected at the community level. Roma waited for this decision for over 15 years. Such a decision by Uzhgorod authority was made after the support provided by lawyers of Carpathian Agency for Human Rights “Vested”.

“The decision of the Executive Committee published on 7 July 2016 on the website of Uzhhorod City Council is unique. And the situation that has developed with the residents of 85, Uzhanskoi St, is unusual. Almost all users of 32 apartments were illegal owners for many years with the tacit consent of the executive bodies of the City Council”, commented the lawyer of the CAHR **Mykola Yatskov** who has been engaged in this case for more than two years.

It is worth noting that 32 Roma families are living in the 2-storey house located in the largest Roma settlement in Uzhhorod without any legal documents certifying the legality of their stay in the apartments.

“Only one of the families has the tenancy agreement. However, nobody has or can have orders to conclude rent agreements with local housing office”, said Mykola Yatskov as he explained that the tenants took these apartments not based on the decision of the Executive Committee of 1999. This decision of the mayor of Uzhhorod provided all the apartments to Roma families that suffered flood.



RESIDENTS OF 85, UZHANSKOI ST, MEETING A LAWYER **MYKOLA YATSKOV** (*in the center*) AND A HEAD OF NGO "ROMANI CHERKHEN" **MYROSLAV HORVAT** (*on the right*).

Since then, more than 300 Roma were on the hook without any basic rights for the management and disposal of their assets, although during all these years, people honestly and openly owned the apartments, maintained landscaping and garbage removal, and a good condition of the house to the extent possible.

"The key problem of the Roma community is the advantage of customary law over the national law. But in the specific case, the problem arose because of "good intentions" of local authorities that deprived the residents of possibility of the possession, use and disposal (control) of their own house", said the lawyer.

In March 2015, lawyers of the CAHR in partnership with the NGO "Romani Cherkhen" decided to help people to legalize their ownership of housing.

In turn, in March of 2016, the residents of the house the respective petition to the city authorities.

“We request the City Council to provide a sustainable solution to our issue. Most people honestly have been living in the house since 1999”, highlighted the leader of the initiative group of the tenants of 85, Uzhanskoi St, Roland Gazi.

The leader of the initiative group of the tenants Roland Gazi submits the petition to the mayor of Uzhhorod Photo by CAHR “Vested”.

One of the real options to legalize property rights of more than 300 Roma was a political decision by the Executive Committee about issuing orders and making contracts with residents of 85, Uzhanskoi St.

And finally, the draft decision was published. It has to be approved within several weeks.

This solution is interim, because it only allows making the treaties. However, the families will be able to finally legalize their homes in the future.

First self-organization body of Roma community created in Svaliava



Svaliava,
Zakarpattia
region



Empowerment of
Roma community

The effort to arrange the Roma self-government in Zakarpattia region started in 2013 and made the long way from looking for Roma activists and creation of initiative groups to long negotiations with representatives of the City Councils.

“Today we are happy to announce that Ukraine created the first body of self-organization of Roma community! This unprecedented case will become a milestone in the history of Roma people: it makes a transition from customary law to civil law relations”, noted **Natalia Kozyr**, project coordinator of CF “Rozytok”.

The first Roma self-government is expected to drastically change the relationship between the Roma community, local authorities and other Ukrainians. We believe that it will help to accelerate and qualitatively improve the integration of the Roma minority. After all, the creation of sustainable communities for cost-effective operation throughout the country does not depend on instructions from above, but on constructively directed bottom-up initiatives. Members of the communities know best their needs, problems and their solutions.

“When it comes to Roma – they were born here, they are living here. This is their territory, where they have the right to develop their community. Creating their self-government is an historic event that will promote development of the Roma community in our city. I am ready to cooperate and help the Roma to grow through their self-government”, said the mayor of Svaliava **Ivan Lanio**.



From left to right: **MATVII BALINT**, **SERHII PONOMAREV**, **NATALIA KOZYR**, **IVAN LANIO**.

It is important to consider two important factors in this regard. First, we are only at the beginning of a long journey, and on our way we will face misunderstanding and have to carefully plan each step. Second, there is no alternative to such development of the Roma community. Self-organization was followed by the European communities, gradually the Ukrainian community joins them.

“Creation of self-government is a great example of grassroots initiatives which are a priority to the International Renaissance Foundation. Given the importance of this and similar projects for the development of Roma community and local communities, strengthening democracy at the local level, the Foundation is committed to support it”, commented **Serhii Ponomarev**, Manager of the Roma Program Initiative of the International Renaissance Foundation.

A significant advantage of Roma self-government to local authorities is that its bodies will be composed of residents of the Roma settlements.

“We were waiting a long time to create this body. Now the enterprising and ambitious Roma community has a structure that can be instrumental to not only improve the quality of life of our community, but also defend our rights and freedoms”, said the prefect of Roma settlement in Svaliava **Matvii Balint**.

Importantly, the system of self-government does not only provide free aid. In order to achieve something, active Roma should work themselves and establish cooperation with partners. That is, being engaged in the development of their communities, they will learn to improve their skills and, at the end of the day, will teach others, thus expanding the circle of active people and showing a good example to the increasing number of Roma.

28.

Residents of Radvanka united in the first Roma house cooperative



Uzhhorod



Empowerment of Roma communities

Residents of the biggest Roma settlement in Uzhhorod founded the first house cooperative of Roma. The whole process lasted for more than half a year. Roma obtained free legal aid at every stage.

Solving of housing problems, improvement of living conditions in Roma settlements are both very difficult and important tasks. Roma frequently do not have identification documents or property documents. Lawyers of **Uzhhorod Community Law Center** together with the European Roma Rights Center (Budapest) and **International Renaissance Foundation** decided to fight this problem and succeeded!

"It is obvious that the most effective method to improve Rome living conditions is a house cooperative. Co-owners can solve such problems as house renovation, infrastructure development, maintenance of area around the house, etc.", said the head of Carpathian human rights agency "Vested" **Volodymyr Navrotskyi** who took care of this case from the very beginning.

THREE MAIN STEPS

The first problem was to find a house in the Roma settlement where several Roma families lived. There was such a house in Radvanka district on Telmana St. – the Roma, including children, lived in a 2-storey house for four households

The second problem was to persuade Roma that a house cooperative is necessary. Several families did not want to have a cooperative – they were happy with everything. However, three families liked the idea.

The third problem was to find property documents for their apartments.

SUPPORT DURING EACH STEP – AND SUCCESS!

The Center’s lawyer Volodymyr Navrotskyi helped the residents to obtain a proof in the regional archive that the house had become the community property in 1979. Residents had to sign rent agreements. Residents obtained death certificates of primary tenants and renewed their agreements in Uzhhorod City Council.

The next step was to prepare documents for privatization. Families had to obtain technical passports and all the necessary documents and apply to the City Council. Then, they registered the right of community property to their apartments.

“The entire process took more than half a year”, noted Volodymyr Navrotskyi, “The process of privatization has been the longest stage”.

Three families had a meeting and decided to set up a house cooperative. They elected a head, a secretary and an auditor. They applied to the registration service and were successfully registered. Members of the house cooperative are going to solve all common problems together.

29.

For sacrifice and love to Ukraine



Kherson



Award for voluntary service

The rector of the Church of the Holy Martyr Tsaritsa Alexandra **Andrii Kalyta** solemnly awarded medals “For Sacrifice and Love to Ukraine” to Kherson volunteers **Natalia Bimbiraite** and **Iryna Podobed**.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate rewards this medal to people who have shown active citizenship, heroism and sacrifice during the events of the Revolution of Dignity, in the national defense in Donbas and Crimea, as well as for volunteer activities and aid to the Armed Forces, the National Guard, volunteer battalions and other military formations of Ukraine.

The award ceremony took place in the temple upon instruction of Patriarch Filaret to recognize the great contribution volunteers made into providing the aid to the Ukrainian Army and IDPs.

Natalia Bimbiraite is a well-known in Ukraine investigative journalist, human rights activist, Development Director of Kherson Regional Charity and Health Foundation, initiator and volunteer coordinator of Kherson Center for Aid to the Army. Natalia was an active participant of Kherson Maidan from its first day. Having a medical specialization, at the end of February 2014 she and a surgeon Vlad Kovalev launched a medical service at Maidan in Kherson. Being actually a journalist, she together with colleagues created the press service of Maidan. It was in the beginning of last year when the dying Yanukovych’s regime tried to resist in any way, and, in particular, with the help of “titushki”. It was extremely dangerous

to be in the epicenter of events and to fight for the European choice of Ukraine.

On March 8, Natalia along with Kherson community activists Anzhela Lytvynenko, Halyna Umanets, Yurii Pekelis, Olha Podhaiska, Larysa Olenkovska, Natalia Kozarenko, Mykhailo Pshenychka, Olha Averianova and Tetiana Chaika took part in a volunteer mission to Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea who at that time had been already blocked by “green men” and the armed “Cossacks”. After the occupation of Crimea by Russian troops Kherson region became the border and the first mobilized soldiers were brought to the Arabat spit and the desert in Kalanchak district, Natalia Bimbiraite initiated the establishment of the coordination center to provide assistance to the army which has nowadays become one of the most powerful volunteer centers in Kherson region.

Iryna Podobed has also been helping the military since the first days of the conflict. The rector Andrii Kalyta said: *“Iryna is a member of our Church. She is a responsible and very modest person. Few people know that she is involved in many charity events, because Iryna does it by her heart and soul, not for some reward. Therefore, it was decided to award her the Medal of the Church – as a person who lives in accordance with God’s commandments”.*

In a speech after the award ceremony, the awarded volunteers expressed for the high honor. Natalia Bimbiraite reminded that the defenders of Ukraine and IDPs were still in need of significant aid, invited the people who want to help the army as volunteers to the Center, located at 47 Ushakova Ave, ap. 124, Kherson; phone: +380505183192, +380960526567. Iryna Podobed in her speech wished the audience a quick victory in the struggle against anti-Ukrainian forces and returning to civilian life.

Two weeks ago, the medal “For Sacrifice and Love to Ukraine” was awarded to Kherson journalists known for their patriotic stance – an editor of “Tvoia Pravda” website Oleh Zaichenko and the reporter of newspaper “Den” Ivan Antipenko.



AT THE AWARD CEREMONY **NATALIE BIMBIRAITE** WAS GREETED BY COLLEAGUES FROM KHERSON CHARITY AND HEALTH FOUNDATION, IRC "LEGAL SPACE" AND NEWSPAPER "VGORU".

07

**LIST OF
LEGAL
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK
MEMBERS**

(станом на вересень 2016 року)

Vinnitsia region

1. Podil Human Rights Center

Address: 10/1 Volodarskoho St., box 8216, Vinnitsia, 21050

2. Khmelnytskyi regional NGO "PRAVO"

Office address: 12 Lenina St., Khmilnyk, 22000, Vinnitsia region (House of Culture);

Address: 9/29 1 Travnia St., Khmilnyk, 22000, Vinnitsia region

Volyn region

3. Volyn regional NGO "Center of Legal Aid" (Kovel)

Address: 14 Hrushevskoho St., Kovel, 45000

Donetsk region

4. Agency for Democratic Development of Donbas

Address: 23 Svobody St., Sloviansk

Zhytomyr region

5. NGO "National Cultural Association of Roma "Romano Kham"

Office address: 1 Soborna Square, 1 floor, Zhytomyr, 10014

Zakarpattia region

6. Charity Foundation "Rozvytok"

Address: 17/12 Myra Square, Mukachevo, 89600

Ivano-Frankivsk region

7. Stanislav Human Rights Group

Address: 2 Harkushi St., of. 40, Ivano-Frankivsk, 76000

Kyiv region

8. Bila Tserkva NGO "Legal Unity"

Address: 55 Levanevskoho St., Bila Tserkva, 09100

Luhansk region

9. Stanytsia-Luhanska Law Community Center

Address: field meetings on schedule

10. Public Platform

Address: offices in three cities:
7 Kurchatova St., Sievierodonetsk
20/133 Kirova Ave., Rubizhne
139 Peremohy Ave., Lysychansk

11. Public Legal Aid

Address: 2 Proletarska St., Novoaidar, 93500

Lviv region

12. NGO “Legal Information Center”

Address: 6/7 Mitskevicha Square, 5th floor, Lviv, 79006

Odesa region

**13. Odesa regional organization
of All-Ukrainian NGO “The Committee of Voters of Ukraine”**

Address: offices in two cities:
25 Sydykovska St., Odesa
16 Kotovskoho Ave, Kotovsk, (in the building of former district
Department of Justice)

Poltava region

14. Pyriatyn regional NGO “Women’s Initiative”

Address: 36 Lenina St., 2nd floor, Pyriatyn, 37000

Sumy region

15. Law Community Center “Pravo”

Address: 58A Horkoho St., Trostianets, 42600

Kharkiv region

16. Dvorichna Rural Communities Foundation

Address: 26 35th Hvardiiska Dyvizia St., Dvorichna, 62702

17. Chuhuiv Human Rights Group

Address: 16A Rosa Luksemburh St., Chuhuiv, 63503

Kherson region

18. Bilozerka Youth Center for Regional Development

Address: 86A Karla Marksa St., Bilozerka village, 75000

19. NGO “Skadovsk Is My Native Land”

Address: 63 Haharina St., Skadovsk, 75700

20. Information Resource Center “Legal Space”

Address: 2 Borysa Mozolevskoho St., off. 6, Kherson, 73003

21. Kherson regional NGO “Committee of Voters of Ukraine”

Address: 1 Prydniprovskyi Uzviz, off. 8, Kherson, 73036

Khmelnyskyi region

22. NGO “Kamenets-Podilskyi Lawyers Association”

Address: 44 Pushkinska St., Kamyanets-Podilskyi, 32300

23. Khmelnyskyi regional NGO “Podil Legal League”

Address: 1 Pushkina Ave, Khmelnyskyi, 29000

Cherkasy region

24. NGO “Law Center”

Address: 44 Smilianska St., off. 325, Cherkasy, 18000

Chernihiv region

25. Chernihiv Civic Committee for the Protection of Human Rights

Address: 57/11 Horkoho St., Chernihiv, 14000

A STEP AHEAD

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEGAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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